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THE CHURCH IN THE CHANGING WORLD

THEODORE G. TAPPERT



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Editor's Foreword

CHURCH WORKERS must have an understanding and appreciation of the development of the Christian church if they are to serve effectively as Christian leaders. This book is intended to help workers develop such understanding and appreciation. It traces the development of the Christian church from its early beginnings to the present day. It answers such questions as: What is the Christian church? Where did it come from? What has been its history throughout the ages? In what respects has it remained unchanged? In what respects has it undergone changes? Why does it hold such a prominent place in modern life? What is its mission in the world? What does it stand for? Why does it spread? What does it do? Particular attention is given throughout the book to the church's teaching, organization, worship, expansion, and life.

The author of this book is the Rev. Theodore G. Tappert, D.D., Litt.D., Schieren Professor of Christian History in the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. His reputation as a careful scholar of church history is well established, and his clear and lucid style of writing is revealed in this text.

The present book is based upon an earlier book, "The Church Through the Ages," by the same author. The earlier book has been reworked to meet present needs and has been brought up to date by the addition of new facts.

It is important that Christian workers grow constantly in knowledge, attitudes, and skills, in order that they may serve effectively in God's kingdom. To help workers experience such constant

growth the church has provided a carefully planned program of leadership education. Leadership courses are provided on several levels, to meet varying needs. The present book is one of the texts in this leadership series, intended for use in connection with the Second Series course "The Church Through the Centuries." In order to receive credit students are required to attend a minimum of ten fifty-minute class sessions and to spend at least 500 minutes in out-of-class preparation.

While this book is intended primarily for use in leadership education schools and classes, it will be used also by other groups in the congregation, and by individuals who are seeking a helpful book on church history for individual reading. In all these situations the book will prove its value, but greatest value will result if it is studied in a leadership class and if intelligent use is made of the sections found at the close of each chapter and bearing the titles "Something to Think About" and "Something to Do." Full use should also be made of the books listed under "Something More to Read" at the back of this book.

Information concerning the organization of leadership education groups, and procedures to be followed in carrying on the program of leadership education, may be obtained from the boards of parish education of the various groups and from state councils of Christian education.

May this book help the church's workers to grow in an understanding and appreciation of the church's teaching, organization, worship, expansion, and life, and may it help them to serve with increasing effectiveness in the church of our Lord and Saviour.

ARTHUR H. GETZ

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CHAPTER I

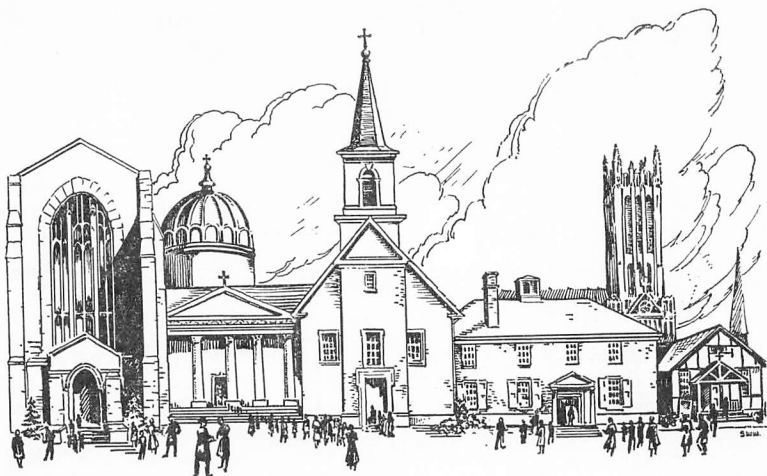
The Christian Church Today

THIS CHAPTER

EVERYWHERE ABOUT US today we see evidences of the church, its influence, and its activities. We must have wondered at times what the church is and why it is as it is. The more we think about it, the more questions occur to us. We do not raise them out of idle curiosity but because we are interested in the church and wish to understand it better. It is our purpose in this book to show that in many respects the church grew step by step into what it is today. Accordingly we can find the answers to many of our questions in the past. But before we begin to look into the history of the church, we wish to take a bird's-eye view of the church as it is today and focus our attention on some of the questions which may perplex us.

The Church in the Community

On Sunday mornings many of the inhabitants of practically every city, town, and village in the United States and Canada "go to church." They are distinguished by the name "Christians" from their neighbors who customarily stay at home on Sunday mornings. At an appointed time, often in response to the summons of a bell, these people assemble. But as a rule all of them do not assemble in the same place. They stream from all directions into a number of centrally located buildings which are different in their structure from all the other buildings in the community. The people cross one another's paths and often pass by one or more of the meeting places in order to reach the one toward which their steps are directed. The mere fact that so many people "go to church" each Sunday indicates the importance of the church in the life of the community.



Various types of church buildings

Each of the meeting places has its own particular name, often carved in the cornerstone or prominently displayed on a bulletin board. One is called Nativity Church, another St. John's Church, another Tabernacle Church, another Turtle Creek Church, and still another Our Mother of Sorrows Church. Attached to these names are others which distinguish them unmistakably. The first is called Lutheran, the second Episcopal, and the rest Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, and Roman Catholic. It is clear that the distinction is not in name only, for the buildings vary somewhat in their appearance. Whether built of stone, brick, or wood, some are marked with crosses and others are not; some have stained glass windows and others have plain ones; some are lofty structures with steeples which reach high into the sky, and others are squat, rectangular buildings with almost no visible adornment at all. Yet all of them are called "churches"; and all the people who gather in them on Sunday mornings call themselves Christians.

What is the explanation of this curious situation? Why do people go to church? Why do they go to different churches, called by different names? What do these names mean?

The Church Throughout the World

What happens Sunday mornings in one town is repeated in almost every other city, town, and village in the land. But it is not only in the United States and Canada that people go to church; the same thing happens in practically every civilized country of the world. Nor is this practice limited to white people, for we know that Negroes and American Indians as well as white people go to church in America. In Africa, even in the remotest interior, other Negroes assemble in much the same way on Sunday mornings. In Japan and China members of the yellow race, and in India members of the so-called brown race, have the same custom. Everywhere in the world there are people who call themselves Christians and go to church. All together they total almost 700,000,000 persons of all ages—a third of the whole earth's population!

Strange as it may seem, these Christians who are scattered over the whole face of the earth also use other particular names, in addition to the general name of Christian, to distinguish themselves from one another. Just as in our land, so in other lands there are Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Mennonites, and Roman Catholics. In some countries almost all the inhabitants are Lutherans. In other countries almost all the people are Presbyterians or Roman Catholics. But even in these countries there are some people who do not belong to the one predominant type of church. Moreover, in such lands as India, China, Japan, and the various parts of Africa we find representatives of virtually every kind of church we have in the United States and in Canada.

How is it that there are so many Christians in all parts of the world? Why do they use the same labels which we use in America

to make distinctions among themselves? How is it that in some countries of Europe almost all the people belong to one particular type of church?

The Churches and the Church

It may be that the various churches throughout the world sometimes appear to be in competition with one another. It actually occurs that in many American towns churches are so close to one another that the peals of their bells mingle in curious confusion, the voice of a preacher can almost be heard in the next church, and the choirs seem to be intent on outdoing one another. The same conclusion might be reached if one were to judge from the ordinary conversation of many of the people who go to the different churches. They could point out real differences in the teaching, worship, organization, life, and growth of the various churches. And this would be correct, for if we take the trouble to inquire we shall find that there are differences.

Nevertheless, all the churches also have many things in common. This is reflected in the very fact that not only one group, but all the people who go to church call themselves Christians and assert that they are members of the Christian church. Here they use the term church in a very inclusive sense. They do not hesitate to include Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Roman Catholics in what they call "the Christian church." It is clear, in fact, that this term embraces all those who go to church, all those who count themselves Christian, throughout the world. Accordingly there must be one Christian church—"one holy, Christian church"—as well as particular churches which are distinguished in some respects from one another. When we look into the matter more closely, we find that this idea of one church throughout the world is justified, for there is fundamental agreement in spite of the many differences. The fact of the matter is that this agreement can

be seen in the very same areas in which the disagreements appear—in the teaching, worship, organization, life, and growth of the church. It will pay us therefore to examine these somewhat more closely.

What is the church? And what are the churches? Why, in spite of differences, are there so many likenesses?

Worship in the Church Today

If we could visit all the churches in a typical American town at the same hour on the same Sunday morning, we should find striking differences. The first thing that would attract our attention is that the church buildings vary quite as much on the inside as on the outside. We should notice that Lutheran, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic churches are usually decorated with symbols and that they have altars, crosses, and candles. As a rule the other churches are much plainer, although not necessarily less comfortable or less expensively furnished. We should also observe that there are differences in the dress of the clergymen. Most Baptist and Congregational ministers wear some reserved form of everyday attire while the others for the most part wear either black gowns, or black cassocks covered with surplices, or even more colorful vestments. The music would not always be of the same character, and the hymns, sung from a variety of hymnbooks, would be solemn or sprightly, classical or popular, sober or sentimental, according to the different churches. Equally noticeable would be differences in the forms of worship. In the Lutheran, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic churches a prescribed "liturgy" is used, while in the other churches the services generally follow freer and more individualistic patterns. Among other things, an observer would also detect differences in both the tone and the content of preaching, and in the way in which the Holy Communion is celebrated. A visit to various churches would thus reveal that there are differences among them.

A really observant visitor to these churches, however, would notice a common thread running through all these differences. He would see that most of the people gather in a quiet and devout manner in all the churches. They show that they are conscious not only of the presence of one another but also of the presence of God. They praise him and pray to him; on the other hand, God confronts them in the readings from the Scriptures, in the sermons, and in the sacraments. But the worshipers are never unaware of the presence of their fellow worshipers. Often they act and speak together in a body, and their prayers indicate that they are thinking of people outside the church as well as inside. These are some of the important common elements that are found in the worship of all the churches.

Why is Sunday the generally accepted day for worship? How is it that public worship is so different in the various churches in spite of many areas of agreement? How did worship come to be what it is today?

Teaching in the Church Today

Such a visit to different churches as we have pictured would show us that there is a large element of teaching connected with worship. Most churches, but by no means all, use the Apostles' Creed to express the beliefs of their members. But these and other beliefs are not always interpreted in the same way. This becomes more evident in the sermons which are preached in the different churches. If we were also to visit the Sunday and weekday church schools, which are conducted in almost all the churches, the variety in teaching would strike us even more. For example, we might hear in the Baptist church that children should not be baptized and that adults should be baptized only by being immersed in water; but many of the other churches teach that it is right to baptize even very young children, and that sprinkling water on their heads is quite as valid

a form of baptism as immersion. Or we might learn in the Roman Catholic church that it is necessary to fast (that is, abstain from eating meat) on certain days appointed by the church; but the other churches deny that this is necessary and avoid setting up requirements other than those which, they say, God commanded. These are two of the more familiar differences in teaching which separate the churches. These and many other differences in teaching become evident in the sermons that are preached in the various churches, and they become even more evident in the study programs that are carried on by them.

Here again, however, there is considerable agreement too. With significant exceptions, many of the churches teach something like this: God created the universe and man. Man, created in the image of God, was originally good. Exercising his freedom of will, man unhappily made evil choices and was thereby separated from God. But such was the mercy of God that he planned to wipe out man's sin and thus make it possible for the fellowship between man and God to be restored. On God's part this was a promise of pure love; on man's part it required a faithful, confident acceptance of the promise. Then, in the fullness of time, according to his promise, God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. By a perfect life and sacrificial death Jesus reconciled God and man. Thus the guilt of sin and its consequences were taken away and man once again became God's child. The whole inner life of every believer is changed by this altered relationship to God. By the power of God's Spirit the believer is enabled to grow in likeness to Jesus. This is reflected in the Christian's total character and conduct. Moreover, the fellowship with God which begins in this life will continue in a fuller and more glorious form in the world to come. Such, in brief, is the sort of teaching which many churches hold more or less in common. Thus, in spite of their differences, there is still considerable agreement in what the churches teach.

Where does the Apostles' Creed come from? Why do many churches use it? How is it that, in spite of this, these churches do not always teach the same thing?

Christian Life in the Church Today

If we return now to the impressions we might gather from the Sunday services in the different churches, we shall notice that there is frequent reference to everyday life. In the prayers used, there are allusions to local and national governments, to schools and hospitals, to agriculture and industry, to employers and employees, to home and friends, to "all who are in trouble, want, sickness, anguish of labor, peril of death, or any other adversity," to "all lawful occupations on land or sea, to all pure arts and useful knowledge," and to "all sorts and conditions of men." What is true of the prayers is quite as true of the sermons. All preachers give more or less attention to the conditions, temptations, hardships, responsibilities, and joys of life. From all this it is very apparent that Christians are vitally interested in the art of living.

More than this, Christians make distinctions between right and wrong ways of living. They approve some things and condemn others, and they actively support what they approve. Offerings gathered in the various churches are regularly used not only to maintain these congregations but also to establish and maintain hospitals, schools, orphans' homes, nurseries, child placement bureaus, homes for the aged, slum settlement houses, and countless other institutions. If we could look into the private lives of people who go to church, we should find similar evidences of love and service expressed in family, social, and business relationships. To be sure, those who call themselves Christians do not always live up to their ideals. Their lives still fall short of the mark of perfection. But in spite of their short-comings, generally speaking, they live on a higher level than other people because they are Christians.

This does not mean that there are no differences in the standards of conduct. Some of the churches are inclined to make rules to govern the conduct of their people. For example, certain Protestants are more strict than others about what they do on Sunday. The same people and their churches sometimes make rules about smoking, drinking, theater attendance, and so on. On the other hand, there are other churches which do not attempt to regulate the external life of their people in this way. Here we have an instance of differences which are easy for us to observe.

How is it that people who go to church practice the Christian life so differently? And yet, in spite of the differences, why are there so many similarities?

Organization of the Church Today

Even the most superficial observation of the various churches is likely to reveal that all of them function through organizations. Most local congregations have governing bodies, whether they are called church councils, vestries, boards of trustees, boards of deacons, or something else. In each case these bodies are usually made up of a group of laymen and a clergyman. The laymen are frequently given the titles of elders and deacons, and they are generally elected by the whole congregation. Each local congregation is in turn connected with a larger organization which embraces all the congregations of its type in a certain district or in the nation. The purpose of local and national, and even international, organizations is obviously to help the church carry out its mission.

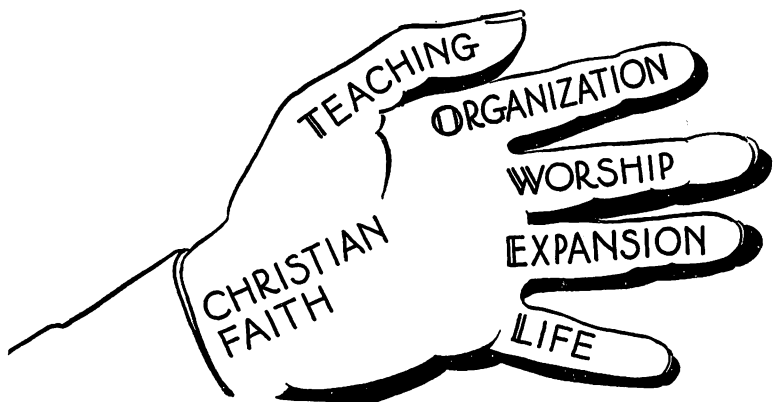
But there are many variations in church organization. Some churches are organized on a national and others on an international scale. Some organizations are loose and elastic, while others are fixed and quite unchangeable. Some (like the Roman Catholic Church) resemble a monarchy; others (like the Episcopal Church) resemble an aristocracy; and still others (like the Presbyterian Church)

resemble a republic. Many of the churches hold that one certain form of organization is necessary; but there are others to which organization is of secondary importance. As a rule, however, each type of church—Lutheran, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, and so on—has its own characteristic organization.

What makes church organization so important? Why are churches organized differently? What prevents all the churches from uniting in one great organization?

Missionary Expansion of the Church

There is one more activity which is common to all the churches and which a casual visitor at Sunday services might observe. This is that all the churches are constantly trying to get people to go to church who are not already in the habit of doing so. Now and then competition might play a part in such efforts toward growth. But as a rule the explanation lies deeper. It is characteristic of Christians to feel that they have responsibility toward their fellow-men. Just as they give part of what they have—time, money, food, clothing—to relieve the wants of the needy, so they are also eager to share their knowledge and experience of Christ. They know that Christ can give others what he has given to them—forgiveness, peace, hope, strength, comfort, and joy. At all events, every church has some kind of missionary program. It tries to win new members in its own community. It helps others to form new congregations and erect churches in other communities. Through its contributions every church also helps to train and support missionaries who are sent to remote lands. There are many variations in the methods and practice of home and foreign missions, but the purpose is quite uniformly the same in all churches. Each church believes it **must** share the blessings which it has experienced through Christ with those who do not at present confess him, whether at home or abroad.



Forms in which the Christian faith expresses itself

Why do not some foreign countries supply their own churches and pastors? Why is it necessary for us to send missionaries and pay for their support?

The Church Today and in the Past

This, then, is a picture of the church as we see it today. Outwardly it is divided, but inwardly it is united by many common threads. It teaches, worships, lives, grows, and organizes. But it is not always easy to understand *why* it teaches, worships, lives, grows, and organizes as it does. Many questions which occur to us when we think about the church in its present forms can be answered only by looking into the past. This is so because the church today developed out of the church in past ages. In its history, therefore, we shall look for a fuller understanding of questions like those we have been raising.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

1. Describe the church as it appears today (a) in a town and (b) throughout the world.

2. Indicate a few differences in the (a) teaching, (b) worship, (c) life, and (d) organization of the various churches.
3. What do all churches seem to have in common with respect to their (a) teaching, (b) worship, (c) life, (d) organization, and (e) expansion.

SOMETHING TO DO

1. Consult four or five acquaintances in various churches and ask each to tell you something of what his church teaches. Make careful note of your findings and compare them with the general statements found above under "Teaching in the Church Today."
2. Make a list of all the activities of your congregation. Compare your findings with the statements made above in the section "Christian Life in the Church Today."
3. Investigate what your congregation is doing to expand its influence and membership.
4. To the questions at the end of each section above, add such other questions as you would like to have answered. Keep these questions and see if they find some kind of answer in the chapters which follow.
5. Read one or more of the books listed at the back of the text under "Something More to Read—Chapter I."

CHAPTER II

The Ancient Church

TO THE YEAR 325

THIS CHAPTER

WE HAVE HAD a bird's-eye view of the Christian church as it is today. To understand the church of today we must have at least some idea of how it began and of how it developed. In this chapter we shall see how it came into being, and what it was like in the first stage of its development. We shall accordingly trace its growth in the first three centuries. As we do this we shall notice that the church grew out of the person and work of Jesus. These determined what the early Christians believed and taught, how they worshiped, and in what manner they lived and organized and grew in number. We shall see, too, that other factors played a part in the beginnings of the church, for Jesus came to men and women who were living in a certain kind of world.

The Time in Which Jesus Lived

In the estimation of Christian people Jesus is the central fact of all history. Even our calendar bears witness to this, for we reckon the years of all time with reference to him. Everything that happened before his birth we speak of as having occurred *before Christ* (B.C.). Everything that has happened since his birth we speak of as having occurred *in the year of our Lord* (A.D., from the Latin *anno Domini*). This manner of reckoning time was first proposed A.D. 532, and was in general use long before the time of the Reformation. Although the original calculation was somewhat in error, our calendar is approximately correct, and it reminds us, whenever we use it, that Jesus was born more than 1950 years ago.

Appearance of Jesus and His Apostles

Born in the little town of Bethlehem, in Judaea, Jesus grew up in a Jewish home and under the influence of the customs and traditions of the Jewish people. After his baptism in the Jordan, when he was about thirty years old, he began to proclaim the good news of salvation for all mankind. He spoke as no man had ever spoken before, his hearers claimed, and he did marvelous things such as no man had ever done. Wherever he went, there were some men and women who acknowledged that here was a man who spoke words and brought gifts which came from God himself.

From among such followers Jesus chose twelve men, whom he prepared to spread the good news of salvation after he should be taken from them. His presence and message were stirring up growing opposition. Finally he was made to suffer and die on a cross. But he appeared afterward to many of his followers, who testified that he had been raised from the dead. Thereupon his disciples, as he had commanded them, taught others about Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. The number of his followers continued to grow, and before long were found in every known land of the world.

The World into Which They Came

The world was different then from the world of today. Practically all that the people of that time knew of the world was their own land and such other lands as bordered on the Mediterranean Sea. They had never heard of America. India and China were quite unknown. Even Germany, although it was near at hand, remained a land of mystery into which only the most daring ventured. Thus the world centered, for the people of history, around the Mediterranean Sea. They believed that they were the only civilized people on earth, and all the people who lived in the unexplored regions beyond their borders were barbarians. And as far as their knowledge went, their conclusion was justified.



The lands around the Mediterranean, including the sea itself, comprised approximately the same area as the present United States of America. The total population probably reached 100,000,000, and represented a great variety of racial and national groups similar to those of the Mediterranean basin today. The people spoke different languages, had different customs, and worshiped many different gods. Yet all these different people were united under one vast government, known as the Roman Empire; it was called *Roman* because its capital was the city of Rome, where the emperor lived who ruled over the civilized world.

The emperor's assistants, called governors and procurators, helped him to enforce laws, and his soldiers were sent to every part of the empire to preserve order. The emperor had excellent roads built from city to city so that his messengers and soldiers could get from one part of the empire to another with the greatest possible speed and ease. These roads were also used by merchants, who transported goods from place to place and developed a lively trade. In all these ways a remarkable unity was achieved. Despite the fact that the Roman Empire included many different kinds of people, there was a constant interchange of goods and ideas. In the course of time more and more of the people, especially in the larger cities, found it necessary to use the same language to carry on their dealings with one another. Through this common language—the Greek language—the people came increasingly to know and to share one another's opinions.

The Jewish People in the Roman World

Jesus spent his entire earthly life in one small corner of this great Roman Empire. He was born and he lived and died in Palestine, a part of the Roman province of Judaea. This small land was inhabited by one of the distinct racial groups which made up the population of the empire—the Jewish people. So proud were the Jews

of their own race that, except for business reasons, they kept themselves aloof from the other people of the empire whom they called *Gentiles*. The most characteristic thing about the Jewish people, however, was their religion. While the majority of the people in the empire believed that there were many gods, the Jews believed in only one God. While many others worshiped images and imaginary gods, the Jews worshiped a personal, living God, who, they declared, had made himself known to them through their patriarchs and prophets. This revelation of God and his will was preserved in the books of the Old Testament by which the Jews tried to live.

For this purpose they met in *synagogues*—the name by which Jewish congregations, and also the buildings in which the congregations met, were known. There were many synagogues in Judaea, and there were also some in other parts of the Roman Empire. Some Jews were merchants who traveled from city to city along the great Roman roads, and in many of the cities which they visited, or in which they settled, they established synagogues. Generally speaking, each of these synagogues was in charge of a group of *elders*. Under the leadership of such men the Jews gathered at appointed times to pray, to sing psalms, to hear the reading of portions of the Old Testament, to listen to an explanation of the portions read, and to receive a benediction. Here, in these simple synagogue services, the Jews learned to know God, his will, and his promises.

The Christians and the Roman Empire

The first followers of Jesus, called Christians after Jesus Christ, were Jews. For a time these Jewish Christians continued to meet in the synagogues. Accordingly they were looked upon as members of a religious party within Judaism, and since the Jews enjoyed religious toleration in the Roman Empire the Christians shared this privilege with them. But the Christians could not long continue to

be identified with the Jews. The first ones to object were the Jews themselves. They disowned those of their own number who became Christians and drove them out of their synagogues. However, it was among the pagans, the people whom the Jews called Gentiles, that more and more of the Christian converts were won. Since such Gentiles did not first become Jews in order to become Christians, the relation between Judaism and Christianity was further dissolved insofar as the legal status of the Christians was concerned.

The pagans, like the Jews, also began to look with suspicion on this new religion which was growing up in their midst. It was different from their pagan religions; in fact, it was hostile to them. Not only did the Christians refuse to worship the many gods of the pagans, but they condemned these gods as false. This in itself was enough to make the Christians very unpopular. All sorts of evil rumors were circulated. For instance, the Christians were said to have no God because they did not worship images; they were charged with hating their fellow-men because they avoided the social life of their neighbors which was usually attended by pagan ceremonies; they were called disloyal to the government because they refused to participate in the official religion of the empire.

So the Christians began to be hounded and attacked. At first persecutions were simply local uprisings, started by resentful people. Here and there, in various cities of the empire, Christians suffered from mob violence. Later the empire itself took a hand in these proceedings. Emperors who were persuaded that the Christians actually were enemies of the state made a number of systematic attempts to wipe them out. Some Christians were cruelly tortured, some were executed, and others were exiled.

These were dark days for the Christians. They were in constant danger of torture and death. Their crime was that they believed in Jesus Christ and accepted him as their only Lord and Saviour.

The Early Expansion of Christianity

The presence of the Christians was taken seriously in the Roman Empire because they were rapidly increasing in strength and influence. Although Jesus had stayed within the borders of the small province of Judaea, he sent out his apostles to "make disciples of all nations." The apostles were joined and followed by others in carrying out this commission. They traveled by sea and along the great highways which the emperors had built. Wherever they had an opportunity—in synagogues, market places, and open fields—they spoke of Jesus and urged people to receive him as their Lord. In some cities these messengers of the Gospel were ridiculed. In others they were forbidden to enter, or were driven out after they had entered. But they continued on their way, eager to tell others what Jesus meant to them. In city after city some men and women were baptized as Christians. Then these in turn spoke to their neighbors about Jesus, and some neighbors, observing that faith in Jesus Christ had really made a difference in the lives of believers, became Christians too. Not even the persecutions could check the growth of the church. Many Christians were ready to give their lives in witnessing to their faith. Those who did (they were called *martyrs*, after the Greek word for witnesses) so impressed the pagans that more and more of them became converts.

In addition to the faith and lives of the early Christians, conditions in the Roman Empire—its common language, its excellent roads and sea routes, its one government—helped to spread the Gospel. By A. D. 100 there were Christians in most of the great cities in the eastern part of the empire—in Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece—and there were also some Christians as far west as Italy and probably as far south as Egypt. By A. D. 325 the geographical expansion of the church reached all the Roman provinces, including the northern coast of Africa. There were Christians as far west as Spain and Gaul, as far north as Britain, and so far to the east that

there were some beyond the frontiers of the empire. Within the brief space of three centuries the small handful of disciples had grown to number perhaps one-tenth of the population of the whole empire.

The Teaching of the Ancient Church

What did the early Christians believe and teach that proved so appealing to their contemporaries? To begin with, the apostles testified to what they themselves had seen and heard and experienced. They not only spoke about these things but they also wrote about them.

Jesus had come among them, the apostles declared, as a human being like themselves, and yet they had recognized in him something more than man. They found in him no sin at all. Moreover, in his every word and act they had seen the reflection of God; in Jesus they had seen their heavenly Father as they had never known him before. Both from what Jesus had said of himself and from what they had seen and experienced, they knew that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. He was not only human; he was also divine.

But what did Jesus' coming mean? He came, the apostles explained, because God had sent him. He came to show that God is a gracious and loving Father, who is not only holy and just, but also merciful and forgiving. So Jesus took upon himself the sins of the world and suffered and died on a cross. But this was not all! He was raised again from the dead. Through all this he made it possible for men to return to God's favor and live in God's presence forever.

This is the "good news," the Gospel, which the apostles proclaimed. This is the Gospel which the Christians continued to profess and teach after the apostles had gone. Now and again, however, perplexing questions were raised about the person and work of

Jesus. Since the apostles were no longer there to answer them, it became customary to consult the apostles' writings instead. To the apostles, Jesus had committed his Gospel. Moreover, as eye witnesses and ear witnesses of all that had happened, they knew the truth about Jesus. Accordingly the writings of the apostles and apostolic men were now gathered into a collection, called the New Testament. And this collection, which began to assume fixed form about the year 200, was set up as a standard by which the truth of any teaching could be judged.

Nevertheless, even with such a standard, there were still some important questions on which all Christians were not in full agreement. Christians did not always interpret the apostolic writings in the same way. Hence it seemed desirable to state very clearly just what the true teaching on such disputed questions was. Statements of belief which were used in connection with baptisms proved useful for this purpose. These statements—called creeds from the Latin *credo*, "I believe"—were appealed to and gradually elaborated. We still use two creeds whose origin can be traced back to the ancient church. One is called the Nicene Creed because it developed out of discussions which were begun at Nicaea. The other is called the Apostles' Creed because it was once believed that the apostles had composed it. Although this is not the case, the Apostles' Creed does contain the substance of what the apostles had taught. Together with the apostolic Scriptures such creeds became standards of doctrine (which is just another word for teaching).

The Kind of Life the Christians Lived

Just as the amazing growth of the church in the first three centuries cannot be explained apart from what the Christians believed and taught, so it cannot be explained apart from the way in which they lived. For the most part the Christians were common laborers and slaves. Yet there was also an increasing number of men and

women from the upper classes of society. Whatever their station in life, all were equal in the sight of God. Whether rich or poor, free or slave, Jew or Gentile, they counted themselves brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus had said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Such brotherly love they had, and they expressed it in many ways. They were hospitable, receiving and lodging travelers in their homes. They provided for those who were poor and in want. Every possible care was given to widows and orphans, to the sick and the imprisoned. Not only fellow-Christians but others, too, shared in this ministry of love.

One thing was very striking. These early Christians were different from other people in the empire. They did not neglect their unfortunate neighbors as others often did. They tried to live according to the will of God rather than the customs of the time. They refused to worship the false gods to whom other people made sacrifices on occasions of business or pleasure. This led Christians to avoid all public gatherings, all shows and banquets and processions. Since they could not attend without making at least a gesture of sacrificing to false gods, they preferred not to go at all. Such was their loyalty to their Lord. But their refusal to participate in public functions aroused suspicions and hatreds.

The Early Christians and Their Worship

Worship was an important part of the Christian life. As we have already observed, the first believers continued to go to Jewish synagogues for worship. But soon they withdrew to meet by themselves, usually in private homes. Unlike the Jews, for whom the Sabbath (Saturday) was the chief holy day, the Christians observed Sunday as the principal day for their assemblies. They called it the Lord's Day, for it was a weekly commemoration of the Lord's resurrection. It also reminded them of Pentecost, the birthday

of the Christian church, when the Holy Ghost had been poured out upon the disciples.

The basic elements in early Christian worship were taken over from the synagogues. But these elements were adapted to the new faith of the converts to Christianity. The Christians prayed, as they had been used to praying—only now, since they were Christians, their prayer was filled with new meaning and assurance. They sang hymns, as they had sung before—only now their singing reflected their new faith. They also continued to hear readings from the Old Testament—only now, when these passages were expounded, the Christians emphasized that the promises of the prophets had been fulfilled in the coming of Jesus. It was only natural therefore that readings from the apostolic writings should be added to the readings from the Old Testament, and in time the former were given primary attention. At the close of the assemblies the Christians took bread and wine, which they had brought with them, and celebrated the Lord's Supper.

In addition to the observance of Sunday as a special day in each week, particular significance came to be attached to the yearly observance of certain days and seasons. In the course of the second century Easter began to be celebrated every spring to commemorate the Lord's resurrection. This was later preceded by forty days of preparation (the season of Lent) and followed by fifty days of rejoicing which culminated in Pentecost.

Organization of Christian Congregations

When the Christians assembled for worship, someone naturally assumed leadership. It would not do to let everyone speak and pray and sing as he wished and whenever he wished. Moreover, someone had to see to it that the poor and needy were properly cared for. Experience also demonstrated that not everybody was capable of distinguishing between truth and error. If the Gos-

pel was to be guarded against distortion, only those who knew the accepted teaching could be allowed to teach and preach. For these various reasons it was inevitable that some kind of organization should develop.

The societies of the early Christians were naturally patterned after models which were familiar to them. Whether synagogues or secular organizations provided the models, every local congregation came to have several types of leaders. (1) Like the Jewish synagogues, each congregation had a group of elders—called presbyters, after the Greek word—who were chosen from among the older and more respected members. It was their duty to assume general charge of a congregation's teaching, worship, and life. (2) Often one of these elders was called bishop—from the Greek word for overseer—and as time passed a sharp distinction was made between bishops and other elders. A bishop came to be the responsible head of a congregation, and later the head of all the congregations in a city or district. When this happened all the elders were placed under the authority of bishops. (3) Under the direction of the elders or bishop of a congregation, deacons collected and distributed gifts of charity. In larger congregations deacons were assisted by deaconesses and other women who helped entertain travelers, visit the sick, and minister to the needy.

There was at first no organization to hold the various congregations together. Persecutions and the discussion of differences in teaching had the effect, however, of drawing the congregations closer together. In the course of the second century bishops in a province sometimes met in the capital city of the province to consult on matters of common concern. These meetings, called synods, came to be held more and more regularly. The bishop in the city in which a synod met usually presided. In this way the bishops in provincial capitals—they were called metropolitans or archbishops—came to exercise a kind of authority over the other bishops. But

there was still no organization to include all the congregations in the empire.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

1. In what kind of world did the church begin?
2. What place did Jesus occupy in the (a) teaching, (b) life, and (c) worship of the ancient church?
3. What was the attitude of pagan people and the Roman government toward the Christians?
4. How did this attitude affect the (a) life, (b) expansion, and (c) organization of Christians?
5. Explain the meaning of the following words: Christian, synagogue, Lord's Day, presbyter, bishop, deacon, deaconess, synod, creed, martyr, New Testament.

SOMETHING TO DO

1. Read the following passages in the New Testament and note the bearing each passage has on what you have read in this chapter: Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:42; 6:1-6; 9:36; 14:1, 23; Romans 16:1; I Corinthians 12:2; 14:1-33; I Timothy 3:1-13.
2. Take a sheet of paper and divide it into two columns. In one column note some features of early Christian worship. In the opposite column set down some parallel features in worship today. Observe the similarities and differences. Do the same for the (b) life, (c) expansion, (d) organization, and (e) teaching of the church.
3. Read the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds in your hymnal. Notice how they answer questions, especially about Jesus and what his coming meant.
4. In a book of reference read the life of one of the following and relate this life with what you have read in this chapter: St. Paul, Justin Martyr, Tertullian.
5. Read one or more of the books listed at the back of the text under "Something More to Read—Chapter II."

CHAPTER III

The Medieval Church

325-1300

THIS CHAPTER

IN THE LAST CHAPTER we learned how the church began and how it developed in the first stage of its growth. This growth brought opposition, and the Christians found themselves in a hostile world. But such conditions now changed. The Roman Empire gradually disintegrated. This was especially so in Europe, where the church established itself more securely than men had dreamed possible. It came to dominate kings and princes, schools and thought, manners and morals. But the church paid a price for this dominance. Its teaching, its worship, its life, and its organization were materially changed. It is our aim in this chapter to understand these changes in the Middle Ages, the period of roughly a thousand years between ancient times and the Reformation.

The Roman Empire Becomes Christian

All attempts on the part of the Roman Empire to wipe out the Christian religion failed. While some Christians denied their faith under trial, large numbers remained loyal to their Lord. No danger, no suffering could shake them. When the pagans saw the steadfastness of these Christians and the willingness of martyrs to die for their faith, some of them became convinced that it would be impossible to destroy the religion which gave men and women such strength and satisfaction.

The persecutions were therefore stopped. In the year 313 the Edict of Milan, which recognized Christianity as a lawful religion, was published. Shortly afterward Emperor Constantine professed

himself to be a Christian. Not only were the Christians now allowed to live in security and worship in peace, but they were also given special privileges. Bishops and presbyters were exempted from the obligation to hold public office or serve in the imperial army. Property confiscated from Christians during the persecutions was restored. It was made legally possible for congregations to receive legacies. Inscriptions and emblems associated with pagan gods were removed from coins, and their place was taken by crosses and other Christian symbols. So completely was the situation reversed that in the year 392 Christianity was made the *only* lawful religion in the empire. Sacrifice to pagan gods was forbidden, and opposition to the Christian church was declared an act of treason. Thus the empire which had tried to overcome Christianity was itself overcome.

There was no longer any public disapproval connected with being a Christian. On the contrary, it became easier to be a Christian than not to be one. The majority of the people consequently adopted Christianity, at least nominally. Only the rural sections, which could not be reached so easily, remained pagan a while longer.

The Church in the Declining Empire

Meanwhile the Roman Empire was growing constantly weaker. Trade was dwindling. Industry was slackening. The government was finding it more difficult to collect taxes and maintain order. The army was in constant demand to suppress uprisings and defend the borders of the empire from invasion. Partly in an effort to bolster the strength of the empire where danger seemed to be most threatening, the capital of the empire was moved from Rome to an eastern city, which was called Constantinople after Emperor Constantine. But this removal of the capital left the West exposed.

While the empire was growing weaker, the church was growing stronger. Some of the metropolitan bishops had been increasing

their power and prestige. The most influential among these was the bishop of Rome. He was highly respected because he was in charge of the empire's largest and wealthiest congregations and because it was believed that the first of these congregations had been founded by St. Peter, the leader of the apostles. His reputation was increased by the good works for which the Christians in Rome had become famous and by reports of their steadfastness under persecution. Moreover, he was situated in the great capital city of the empire. Even after the capital had been removed to Constantinople, the people of the West continued to think of Rome as the proper seat of authority. All the glamour connected with the ancient city of the Caesars attached itself to the bishop of Rome, and the people looked to him for leadership almost as much as they looked to the emperor in far away Constantinople. In fact, the more the emperor's power declined in the West, the stronger the bishop of Rome became.

The Teutonic Migrations in the Empire

To the north of the empire lay great stretches of land inhabited by Teutonic tribes. Left to themselves, the Teutons remained untouched by the higher civilization in the empire. The Romans called them barbarians, for they had no cities, no highways, no commerce, no industry, no schools, and no literature. These barbarians worshiped the sun and the moon and the forces of nature; only a few of them near the borders of the empire were Christians. They lived a carefree life in the open, and often, when disturbed by hostile tribes or pressed by the need of food, they would move from one place to another. These movements, or migrations, carried the Teutons southward and westward, closer and closer to the borders of the empire.

Roman armies were at first able to keep the migrating Teutons from crossing the borders. But finally the empire grew so weak

that they could no longer be halted. Vast hordes of them crossed the borders and swept into the empire. Many of these invasions were altogether peaceful; the Teutons were simply seeking refuge from hostile tribes behind them (like the Huns of Asia), or else they were looking for more fertile lands and better hunting grounds on which to settle. There were other invasions, however, which were in the nature of armed conquests. For a long time the Teutons roamed about in the empire, and then they finally settled down—Lombards in what is now northern Italy, Vandals in northern Africa, Goths in Spain, Franks in the valley of the Rhine, Burgundians in the valley of the Rhone, and Angles, Saxons, and Jutes in what is now England.

Europe and the Church after the Migrations

Because the capital of the empire had been shifted to the East, leaving the West exposed, it was in the West that the migrations produced the most far-reaching changes. All the western provinces were overrun by the Teutons. The invaders settled down alongside the older Roman inhabitants and mingled freely with them. Gradually the two races merged, their customs and institutions blended, and their languages were modified by each other. Where the older inhabitants were more numerous (as in present Italy, Spain, and France) the Roman, or Latin, influence remained uppermost; where the invaders were more numerous (as in England, Germany, and Scandinavia) the Teutonic influence was predominant. This is still apparent in the language and physical characteristics of the various peoples of Europe.

Whether one strain or the other predominated, the effect of the barbarian migrations was that the more advanced civilization of the Romans was dragged down more nearly to the level of the Teutonic tribesmen. Learning declined. Trade came to a virtual standstill. Cities fell into ruins. Roads and shipping lanes were

neglected. And so Europe entered the dark night of the Middle Ages. The old empire continued to exist only in the East. In the West, in Europe, it was quite dead. Teutons gained control of the government, and in place of the former unified empire a series of smaller kingdoms appeared.

But what happened to the church? In the East the church remained much as it was. In the West the fall of the empire at first seemed to be a heavy blow because the church had come to rely on the support and protection of the emperor. In Europe it was now deprived of this help. But the church was strong. It rallied around the bishop of Rome, the only great leader of the old empire who was left in the West. Under his leadership the church was able to stand firm while the empire was crumbling. The organization of the church remained intact—the sole surviving institution of Roman civilization. What unity was left in Europe centered in the church, led by the Roman bishop. What learning was left was kept alive by the church. After long centuries, largely through the influence of the church, a new civilization rose out of the ruins of the old.

The Barbarians Converted to Christianity

The eventual rise of a new civilization was made possible only by the conversion of the barbarians. Some of the Teutons who lived near the borders of the empire became familiar with the Gospel; a man named Ulfila, for example, carried the message of Jesus to the Goths and translated the Scriptures into their language. But most of the barbarians were still pagans. To make Christians out of them, missionaries were sent out, notably by the bishop of Rome. These missionaries traveled far and wide, and courageously faced hardships and trials in order to win converts to the faith.

The first important conversion was that of Clovis, king of the Franks. When Clovis was told of the bitter sufferings and death of

Jesus he exclaimed, "Had I and my Franks been there, it would never have happened!" Such was his zeal for the new faith that he did not rest until all his Franks were Christians, and then he began to force the neighboring tribes to accept Christianity too. The Teutons usually followed their kings into the church. Once the king of a tribe was converted, the people either followed of their own free will or were forced to follow at the point of a sword.

But the conversion of the barbarians was not so much due to force as it was to the work of heroic missionaries. These men went out far beyond the borders of the old empire to tell the barbarians about Jesus. Century after century passed, and the Gospel was carried farther and farther into the interior of Europe. Augustine of Canterbury carried it to the barbarians in what is now England; Boniface to those in the present Germany; Ansgar to the Scandinavians; and Methodius and Cyril to the Slavs in the eastern part of Europe. These are just a few of the many missionaries, a large number of whom gave their lives to spread the Gospel of their Lord. By the end of the Middle Ages all Europe had been brought into the fold of the church, and great advances had also been made in Russia.

The missionary expansion among the barbarians, following the amazing growth which resulted from the Christianization of the Roman Empire, confronted the church with new dangers. The Gospel was not understood by all the new converts. Some of them became Christians only because it was the popular thing to do, or because the step was dictated by social or business advantages, or because actual pressure had been applied. But even those who were earnest in their profession of Christianity found it difficult to change old habits and accustomed ways of thinking. They carried non-Christian notions and practices with them into the church. The consequence was that in many congregations customs and beliefs appeared which did not really belong there.

Lowered Standard of Christian Life

Many people who professed to be Christians were careless in their conduct and selfish in their relations with their fellow-men. Their lives differed little from the lives of pagans. They did not succeed in freeing themselves entirely from surviving superstitions. As a result they put their trust in magic rather than in God. They thought of their old pagan gods as evil spirits and demons who did them harm. To protect themselves from injury the people turned to the church and believed that anything connected with it would be effective in warding off evil. So the people recited Latin prayers by rote. Later rosaries (chains of prayer beads) were used. People also carried charms in the form of medals and pictures, believing that these would protect them.

More prominent than magic in the life of the people was the notion of good works. Vice, crime, and violence were common in the Middle Ages, and it was generally believed that the consequence of such wrong doing could easily be wiped out by doing some equivalent good. This was not the official teaching of the church. But the ignorance of many clergymen and the negligence of the bishops made it possible for such a belief to become widespread. In order to escape from punishment for their sins, therefore, the people were eager to do good works. The effect was amazing. Roads and bridges were built, new churches were erected and beautifully decorated, the sick were attended in hospitals, swarms of beggars were supplied with alms, and countless gifts of land and money were made to the church.

Of all good works, flight from the world was regarded as the best. This was a way of living which began to flower about the time of Constantine as a protest against the lowering standard of Christian life. In order to flee from the temptations of the world, a few Christians withdrew to solitary places in deserts or mountains. There they lived by themselves as hermits, fasting, praying, wel-



Monks copied books in monasteries

coming hardship, and waiting for death. Such monks believed that their manner of life was especially pleasing to God. As time passed, monks ceased to live alone; for the most part they lived together in large houses called monasteries. Their life was carefully regulated by the three rules of poverty, chastity, and obedience, which required that they give up all personal possessions, remain unmarried, and obey their superiors implicitly. Similar houses were founded for women, who were called nuns. The number of monastic houses increased rapidly, and in many cases they became so wealthy and so worldly that more self-denial was practiced "in the world" than in monasteries. Yet large numbers of earnest men and women, who were concerned about their soul's salvation, became monks and nuns.

Rise of the Roman Catholic Church

Since most of the multitudes who were won for Christianity did not enter monasteries, the number and the membership of con-

gregations were vastly increased. The duties of bishops, presbyters, and deacons became proportionately burdensome. Part-time service was no longer adequate, so these men became full-time officers and were paid regular salaries. In fact, they were now more than officers; they were specialists in matters of doctrine, worship, and life. As such they came to be looked upon as comprising a special class (clergymen) set apart from the rest of the people (laymen).

Clergymen in a province continued to meet, now as before, in synods. A further step was taken in the direction of organizational union when Emperor Constantine summoned all bishops in the empire to meet in Nicaea in the year 325. Such world assemblies, called councils, continued to be held from time to time to discuss questions of common concern. Whatever these councils decided, whether in the field of doctrine or practice, was made binding on all Christians. Thus teaching, worship, and life became more uniform throughout the Christian world than had been the case in the earlier periods.

Important though the councils were for the unification of the medieval church, the growing power of the bishop of Rome proved more effective. As we have already noticed, he was a tower of strength in the West when the Roman Empire was collapsing. He was also responsible for much of the missionary effort among the barbarians, whereby his influence was extended to new lands. And now the bishop of Rome claimed to be the head of the whole Christian church on earth. As such he reserved for himself the title of *pope* (from *papa*, meaning father). Christ, he declared, had made St. Peter the leader of the apostles. The pope was the direct successor of St. Peter, and just as Peter had been the chief of the apostles, so the pope, as his successor, was the supreme head of all the bishops and other clergymen in Christendom. What was more, he claimed to have sole possession of the unique power of opening and shutting the gates of heaven. According to these claims, no one

who refused to submit to the pope, whether peasant or king, could enter the kingdom of God.

Such was the claim of the pope. The rulers of Europe were not easily put off by this theory. They insisted that their right to rule came from God, not the pope. To demonstrate their own mastery, they challenged some powers claimed by the pope. For instance, they asserted that they had a right to appoint all the bishops in their territories. They also demanded that these bishops obey them. Moreover, they expected to share in the income from the churches in their territories. Since the pope claimed that all these privileges were his, and his alone, he came into sharp conflict with the rulers. Century after century this quarrel between popes and rulers continued. Sometimes it led to war and bloodshed. But in the end most of the pope's claims were recognized. He became the absolute master of the church in all Europe, and even the rulers usually submitted to his authority. Only the church in the East denied his right to rule, and in distinction from this eastern (Orthodox) church, it has become customary to speak of the western church as Roman Catholic. It is called *Roman* because the bishop of Rome, the pope, is its head; it is called *Catholic* (meaning universal) because it claims to be the only true church in the whole world.

To rule such a vast church required an elaborate machinery of government, and this was gradually developed. The pope surrounded himself with all kinds of trained assistants. He established separate boards to handle points of law, questions of worship, financial affairs, doctrinal problems, and other matters. With the help of these boards he made the laws of the church, regulated its worship, and defined its doctrine. He controlled the whole body of clergymen, and through the clergy he controlled the rest of the people. So, step by step, the power of the pope continued to grow, and his authority was expanded over ever widening areas, until for millions he came to be the very personification of the church.

The Gospel Obscured by Changed Teaching

The church was not only the dominant power; it was also the recognized teacher of Europe during the Middle Ages. The rude barbarians had never cultivated learning, and consequently they had to look to the church for instruction in all branches of knowledge. As a matter of fact, they received very little. Schools were established, it is true, but as a rule they were intended only for the training of clergymen. It was not until the close of the Middle Ages, when universities were founded, that laymen as well as clergymen learned to read and write.

In the schools of the church young men spent most of their time copying and studying the writings of popes, bishops, and other teachers. Most of these writings were in Latin, or had been translated into Latin, for this was the language of education as well as of the church throughout the West. The "schoolmen," as the teachers in the schools were called, collected quotations from these Latin writings, arranged them according to topics, elaborated them, and then developed them by keen logical analysis into doctrines. Although the schoolmen continued to use the Scriptures as a source and standard of truth, they relied increasingly on what churchmen had written in the centuries after the time of the apostles. Thus the tradition of the developing church began to overshadow the Scriptures. The consequence was that the teaching of the church gradually drew away from the teaching of the apostles.

One of the gravest departures from the Gospel had to do with the forgiveness of sin. According to the apostles only God can forgive sin. But now the church taught that Christ had given this power to the pope; they derived their power from him, even as he derived his power from Christ through St. Peter. This mysterious power enabled the clergymen, and the clergymen alone, to declare the sins of men forgiven. But the church went even further than this and taught that such forgiveness freed men only from eternal

punishment; it did not free them from similar temporary punishment on earth and in purgatory. These consequences of sin could be canceled only by doing certain good works which the church prescribed—praying, fasting, giving alms, visiting holy places, etc. For the performance of such good works an “indulgence,” or pardon, was granted. The masses of people misunderstood this whole teaching and made it even worse than it was. They believed, as even their pastors usually came to believe, that they could *earn* forgiveness and eternal life by their deeds. As we have already seen, this became a controlling motive of Christian life in the Middle Ages.

The Development of Formal Worship

The rapid increase in the number of Christians which began in the time of Emperor Constantine made it necessary to provide buildings for public worship. Since the Christians now no longer needed to fear persecution, churches (from the Greek for Lord's Houses) were built in prominent places and in such a way that they could easily be recognized for what they were even from the outside. On the inside of the churches pictures of Christ, sometimes of the apostles, and later also of saints, were carved or painted on the walls. At one end an altar was placed for the celebration of Holy Communion, and a lectern (desk) from which the Scriptures were read.

In these churches Christians continued to assemble, especially on Sunday, which had been a legal holiday ever since the time of Emperor Constantine. The Sunday services preserved all the principal features from the worship of the ancient church. But fixed forms increasingly replaced the earlier spontaneity. For the most part the people watched and listened in awed silence. The clergy-men did all the reading, speaking, and singing. Since the Latin language was used, most of the people could not fully understand what was being said and done. To be sure, the preaching was in the

language of the common people, but there was very little of it. The emphasis was on the forms of the liturgy, or service, which was much the same in all the churches; and this liturgy was always said or sung in Latin. Even the choirs were made up of clergymen, and the people merely listened rather than participated actively.

The consequence of all this was that the clergymen came to be set apart from the laymen in worship as well as in organization. They alone were educated; they alone were believed to have received the power to speak for God and to forgive sins; they alone were able to conduct public worship; they alone were permitted to receive the cup (wine) in the Holy Communion. The sharp distinction between clergymen and laymen was further emphasized by their dress, for clergymen continued to wear the long, loose garments of the Romans which the rest of the people had given up since the barbarian migrations.

Lent, Easter, and Pentecost continued to be observed as special festivals. Other similar festivals—Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, and Trinity—were now added. Besides these a host of other days were set apart to honor the Virgin Mary and innumerable holy men and women called saints. Worshiping in the presence of the bones or other relics of these saints was popularly believed to be good for body and soul.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

1. What effect did the Edict of Milan have on the church?
2. Describe the decline of the Roman Empire.
3. Who were the barbarians, and how were they converted to Christianity?
4. Explain how the bishop of Rome became pope.
5. How did the changes in Europe during the Middle Ages affect the (a) teaching, (b) worship, and (c) life of the church?

SOMETHING TO DO

1. Some things which appeared in the medieval church still have a place in the church today. Make a list of medieval customs and opposite them indicate the parallels in your church today.

2. Read the life of one of the following in a book of reference: Benedict of Nursia, Boniface, Ansgar, Pope Innocent III, Francis of Assisi.

3. Superstitious practices, not unlike those that were common in the Middle Ages, are sometimes practiced today. Make a list of as many of them as you can.

4. Certain words still in use today became common in the Middle Ages. Define these: clergyman, layman, pope, monk, nun, schoolman, monastery, liturgy, indulgence, saint, relic.

5. Read one or more of the books listed at the back of the text under "Something More to Read—Chapter III."

CHAPTER IV

The Reformation Church

1300-1600

THIS CHAPTER

BY THE CLOSE of the Middle Ages the church was quite different from what it had been at the time of the apostles. In some respects the changes which had taken place were the necessary consequences of altered conditions. But unfortunately the Gospel was no longer rightly understood or interpreted. Now, however, a new age dawned. And with the dawn of this new age came an opportunity to reform the abuses in the church and return to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The response to this opportunity was not the same everywhere, and western Christendom was divided as a result. The upheaval which accompanied this division brought many new changes, not only in organization but also in teaching, worship, and life. We shall now try to understand what happened in this age which is especially important for us.

The Revival of Activity in Europe

New life began to surge through Europe at the close of the Middle Ages. Although the barbarian migrations had brought the old Roman civilization to a low level, slowly but surely the church won the people of Europe and placed them under its discipline. Thus the church helped to prepare the way for a great revival of activity which came to flower in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. This revival (or *Renaissance*, as it is usually called) was not simply a restoration of the old Roman civilization; it was a new civilization which developed gradually out of the fusion of Roman and Teutonic elements.

The revival was marked, in the first place, by a rapid expansion of trade and commerce. Cities once again grew in size and number. In order to make travel and communication between these cities easier, old roads were rebuilt and new ones were constructed. Navigable rivers became busy highways of commerce, and great fleets of ships began to sail at regular intervals along the coasts of the seas. Sailors ventured farther and farther into regions before unknown in order to find new trade routes. Thus the coasts of Africa were explored, merchants traveled to the Far East, and Columbus set out on a voyage which led to the discovery of America.

The revival was marked, in the second place, by a notable spread of learning. Merchants carried ideas as well as goods, and many of the merchants who accumulated wealth encouraged learning. The schools of the church grew into, or were supplemented by, great universities in which laymen as well as clergymen studied. Students now devoted themselves as much to arts and literature, to law and science, as they did to theology. Old ideas were rediscovered and new ideas were expressed. When printing was invented (about the year 1450) and books became cheaper, more people were able to read and become acquainted with these ideas. The consequence was that men began to think for themselves more than they had before.

A third important feature of the revival was the appearance of stronger nations. A few kings extended their territories and became powerful rulers. Strong armies were maintained to defend these kingdoms, and regular taxes were collected to support them. In each nation, moreover, the current speech of the people gained new importance. Latin was still the language of the church and the schools, but influential thinkers also began to write in English, German, French, Italian, and other popular tongues. Thus the division of Europe into separate nations was sharpened by the rise of national literatures.

Effects of the Revival on the Church

Such changes had profound effects on the church. The achievements of men in accumulating wealth, discovering new knowledge, and erecting strong governments gave them a fresh sense of their own ability and strength. With eagerness and enthusiasm they threw themselves into the pursuit of the power and the wealth, the beauty and the truth of this world. As they did so, treasures and truths of the spiritual world often lost reality for them. Even among clergymen there were many, especially high officials, who fell victim to the spirit of the times. They became careless in their life and conduct. They surrounded themselves with the luxury of princes and forgot the thousands who were suffering in want. They raised armies and carried on wars of conquest as if this were their calling.

All this cost money. Means were therefore devised to bring into the church treasuries a share of the wealth which this age of commerce was accumulating. All kinds of taxes and fees were imposed by the church officials, and they weighed heavily on the already burdened common people. Of all the sources of income, probably the most profitable was found in the sale of *indulgences*. As we have already learned from our study of the Middle Ages, an indulgence was a pardon which wiped out specific penalties which the church had imposed on sinners. Indulgences were granted by the pope, through his subordinate clergymen, in return for the performance of good works. Now, however, payments of money began to be substituted for good works. The consequence was that people were led to believe, not only that they could *earn* forgiveness, but also that they could *buy it*. Since the pope and bishops were often more interested in raising money than in teaching the Gospel, they made little effort to correct such false notions. In this way abuses multiplied, and the spiritual purposes of the Gospel were obscured. Thoughtful and sincere men became increasingly aware that all was not well in the church and that a reformation was needed.

The Revival Prepares for Reformation

From all this it might seem that the Renaissance only increased the abuses and wrongs which had previously appeared in the church. But this is only one side of the picture. The same influences which were doing so much harm were at the same time making it possible to do away with the abuses.

In the universities men were learning to think for themselves. They dared to make investigations of their own. Here and there men like John Wyclif and John Huss came to conclusions different from those which leaders in the church were teaching. This was especially true when men began to study Greek, and were thus enabled to read the New Testament and other ancient writings in the language in which they had been written. This new freedom of investigation was in turn aided by the strong nations which were appearing. Kings were now stronger than popes, and kings sometimes defended their subjects who dared to assert opinions differing from those of popes. Moreover, the revival of trade made it easier for such opinions to spread. Students and teachers, as well as merchants, were traveling from city to city and from country to country along the same roads and sea routes. In this way any new opinion spread quickly, both by word of mouth and by means of printed books and pamphlets.

Luther and the Beginning of Reform

It was at such a time and under such conditions that Martin Luther grew up in Germany. He attended one of the universities which we have been discussing. But instead of becoming a lawyer as his father had planned, Luther became a monk. Like so many other earnest young men of his day he entered a monastery to work out his salvation. There he fasted, prayed, and studied until he was exhausted and sick. But none of the good works recommended by the church gave him the assurance of peace with God which he

was seeking. He did not find it until he pondered long and laboriously over the message of the New Testament. There he came upon a witness to God and to what God had done for man in Christ which was different from what he had been taught. This led him finally to the knowledge and joyful experience that God is a gracious Father. No merit of his own, no good works which he did, had helped Luther. But now, when he learned to yield to God and trust the promises of God, revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ, Luther found that peace which the monastery had not been able to give him.

While this conviction that he was "justified by faith without the works of the law" was growing upon him, Luther was made professor in the University of Wittenberg. His studies there led him deeper and deeper into the Greek text of the New Testament. Gradually he became aware of many fundamental differences between the teaching of the apostles and the teaching of popes and others in his time. This led him to call attention to the fact that the Gospel had been obscured. So he wrote, for example, against the practice of selling indulgences and against the whole medieval notion of good works. Such practices and teachings, which misled people into believing that forgiveness could be earned or even bought, were contrary both to his own experience and to what he read in the New Testament. But the popes and bishops opposed his suggestions for reform. They condemned Luther. Thus Luther was forced, quite against his will, to break with the organized church rather than give up what he had found to be the true teaching of the Gospel.

Expansion of the Reformation Movement

Luther's bold defiance of the popes drew large numbers to his side, for there were many others who were eager to see the church reformed and were only waiting for a leader. In Luther they found

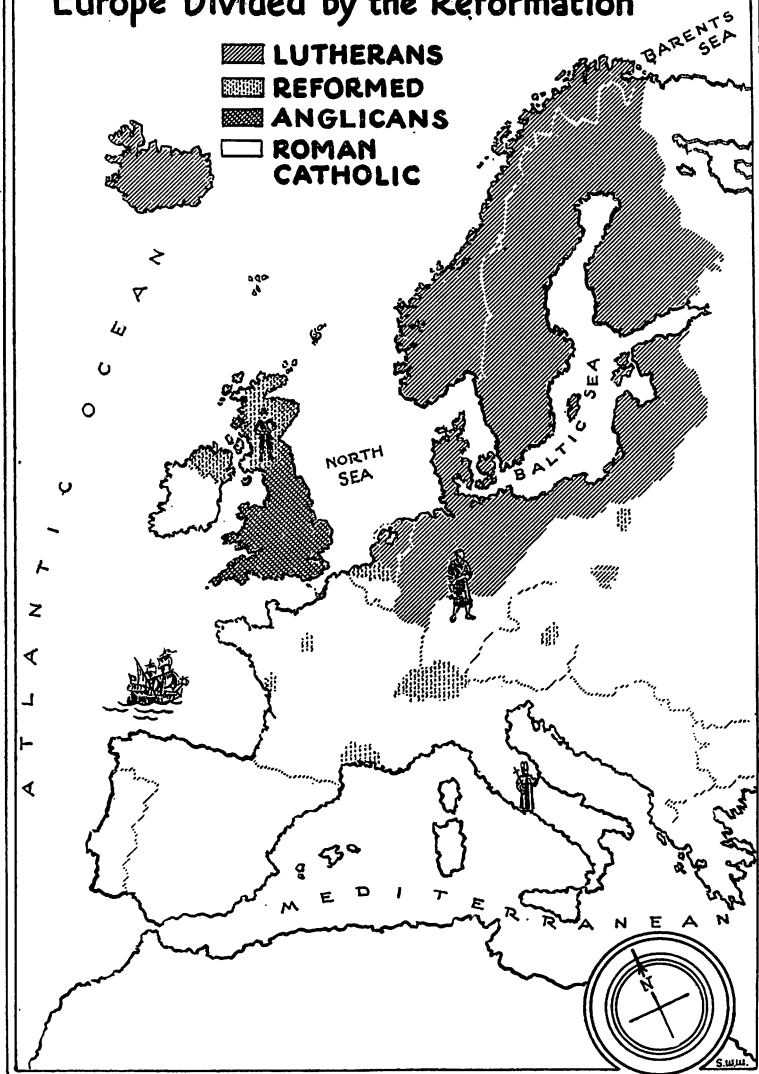
such a man. He presented the Gospel clearly and with power in his writings, preaching, and teaching. His students carried his teachings wherever they went. His books were read not only by learned men but also by the common people. Within a few short years a large part of Germany followed Luther in his break with the Roman Church. His influence also reached other countries, although not in the same degree. Those who became his followers or were influenced by him called themselves Evangelicals (from *evangelion*, meaning Gospel) and later also Lutherans.

What happened in Germany also happened in the Scandinavian countries which lay to the north. Students and merchants carried the new understanding of the Gospel from Germany into the northern lands. There reforms were introduced by great national leaders who did for their countries what Luther was doing for Germany. Olavus Petri was the leading reformer of Sweden, and from Sweden the reform movement spread to Finland. Hans Tausen is often called the Luther of Denmark, and the reforms which he helped introduce were gradually extended to Norway as well as Denmark. Thus, in the course of the sixteenth century, all these northern lands became Lutheran.

Still other Reformers appeared elsewhere. Some of these, although they agreed with Luther in many of his convictions, did not accept all his views. Such a man was John Calvin. Most of the people in Switzerland, Holland, and Scotland were influenced by Calvin rather than by Luther. They were therefore called Calvinists, or sometimes Reformed, to distinguish them from the Lutherans. In England neither Lutheranism nor Calvinism succeeded entirely in taking the place of Roman Catholicism. Elements of all three were combined in a unique way, and accordingly the church there was simply called Anglican, which means English. To these three great Reformation groups—Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican—were added a number of smaller ones like the Baptist and Mennonite

Europe Divided by the Reformation

-  LUTHERANS
-  REFORMED
-  ANGLICANS
-  ROMAN CATHOLIC



groups, whose members were scattered in various parts of northern Europe. The general name of Protestant was applied to all the Christians who protested against and withdrew from obedience to the Roman popes.

Since Italy, Spain, Ireland, and most of France remained in submission to the pope, the people of Europe were now divided into two great religious camps, Roman Catholic and Protestant. The Roman Catholics were united and remained much as they had been in the Middle Ages. But the Protestants were divided; they continued to be called Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, Baptists, Mennonites, etc., according to what they taught and how they worshiped, organized, and lived.

The Teaching of the Protestant Churches

The Protestants had certain teachings in common. Central among these was the doctrine of "justification by faith without the works of the law." Man, the Protestants taught, is by nature sinful. Try as he may, by his own strength man cannot free himself from sin. And because sin cannot stand in the presence of God's holiness, sinful man is cut off from fellowship with God. But God is gracious as well as holy. He therefore acted to restore the broken fellowship. In Jesus' coming among men, in his life, death, and resurrection, God took the initiative. Forgiveness and salvation are his gifts. No man can earn or buy them. God gives them freely to all who turn to him in faith. In its main features this is the doctrine of justification by faith which distinguished most Protestants from Roman Catholics.

This was not a new teaching. The Protestant Reformers found it in the New Testament and in some of the writings of the ancient church as well as in their own experience. So it was essentially a return to what the apostles had taught. The same can be said about other important teachings of the Reformation. Whenever a conflict appeared between what the apostles had taught and what the

popes were teaching, the Reformers tried to follow the New Testament. In this way the Scriptures were restored to their place as a standard by which Christian truth must be tested and judged. In keeping with this emphasis Luther translated the Bible from the original languages into German in order that his countrymen might be able to read and understand it. His example was quickly followed by other Reformers who provided their own people with similar translations.

But there were still doctrinal differences among the various Protestant groups. Many of these differences resulted from the way in which the Bible was approached and used. Calvinists, for example, gave to the Old Testament an authority quite equal to that of the New Testament; on the other hand, Lutherans, following Luther's insight, made the message of the New Testament central and interpreted the Old Testament in its light. As a result the Calvinists thought of Jesus in terms of God's sovereign will and stressed obedience to his commands, while the Lutherans thought of Jesus rather in terms of God's sovereign love and stressed trust in his promises. Other differences resulted from conflicting interpretations of particular passages of the Bible. For example, Baptists insisted that faith must precede baptism and accordingly rejected infant baptism.

Since such differences existed—many of them important—it seemed necessary for each group to define its own teaching in distinction from that of others. To meet this need statements of belief, called confessions, were prepared. The chief Lutheran statement of this kind is the *Augsburg Confession*, named after the city of Augsburg in which it was prepared in 1530.

Differences in the Manner of Worship

Just as there were differences in doctrine, so there were also differences in the worship of the various Protestant churches. Yet there

were certain common features too. Most striking of these was the substitution of the language of the people for Latin. This enabled everybody to take intelligent part in the services, to understand what the clergyman said and did, and to unite in the singing of psalms or hymns. Another characteristic of all Protestant worship was renewed emphasis on preaching. Sermons once again occupied the place which they had had in the ancient church, and from such preaching the people learned to know more about Jesus and what his coming meant.

Despite these common features, there were also significant differences. Lutherans were more conservative than the Reformed. The principle followed by Lutherans was that the existing forms of worship ought to be preserved, except such parts as were in conflict with the Gospel. Altars, candles, crosses, vestments, and church festivals were recognized as valuable aids in worship and were kept. The liturgy was also retained after it had been rid of elements which were contrary to the Gospel.

Anglicans followed similar principles. The Reformed churches, however, made far more radical changes. Only what was specifically prescribed in the Bible was regarded as permissible. Accordingly most of the existing forms were discarded. Churches were stripped of their ornaments, altars, crucifixes, and candles. Church festivals were not observed as a rule, and congregational singing was limited to biblical psalms. The resulting plainness in Reformed worship was carried to even greater length by such smaller groups as the Baptists and Mennonites.

Variety in Church Organization

All Protestants rejected the claims of the pope as false. Christ, they declared, is the only true head of the church; hence no one is bound to obey the pope. Nevertheless all Protestants recognized the need for some sort of organization. But when the question arose as

to what the character of this organization should be there were differences of opinion.

Following the views of Calvin, the Reformed churches adopted a presbyterian form of government, centering in presbyters or elders. Each local congregation elected a number of elders, all of whom were equals although one of their number was especially entrusted with the duties of the ministry. Together these elders regulated the affairs of the congregation. Ministers and representative elders were sent from such local congregations to synods, and here actions were taken in the interest of uniformity and unity among the congregations.

The Anglicans placed authority in the hands of bishops rather than in the hands of presbyters. So theirs was called an episcopal (from the Greek word for bishop) form of organization. It was a modification of the system which was already in existence at the time of the Reformation. Presbyters (often called priests, as in the Roman Church) were in charge of local congregations, and all the presbyters in a district were subject to the authority of a bishop.

Some of the smaller bodies, notably the Baptists, adopted still another form of organization. It was called congregational because authority rested neither in bishops nor in presbyters but in the whole membership of each congregation. In this case one congregation had no organizational relation to any other.

While all these church bodies believed that their own form of organization was the only true and scriptural form, Lutherans were not too much concerned about the organizational pattern. For them the important thing was that the Gospel be proclaimed in its power and purity. This could be done under any system, and therefore it did not matter what particular form of church organization was adopted. As a result Lutherans sometimes had an episcopal, sometimes a presbyterian, sometimes a congregational, and sometimes a mixed form of organization.

The Life of the Protestant People

The reforms introduced in the teaching of the church had a very practical bearing upon life. Lutherans and the Reformed differed in their emphases here too. This difference was due especially to the larger place which Calvinism gave to the Old Testament, for this often resulted in an austerity which was molded by law and which was alien to Lutheranism. Nevertheless, one of the greatest contributions of the whole Reformation movement was that it recovered the apostolic ideal of life.

For one thing, the true motive of Christian life was restored. During the Middle Ages the notion of merit and rewards, connected with good works, supplied the incentive to a good life. Against this view the Reformers lifted their voices in vigorous protest. "Good works do not make a good man," Luther asserted, "but a good man does good works, just as only a good tree can bring forth good fruit." Love of God and fellow-men flow naturally from faith.

In the second place, the Reformers restored the true content of Christian life. The guide and standard of Christian conduct, they said, is not a human law or even the law of the church; it is the law of God. The medieval church prescribed withdrawal into a monastery as the surest way of gaining God's favor. But God, said the Reformers, placed man in the world and gave to each a place in family, calling, and state. In such natural associations of his daily life man must express his faith and love. It is therefore far better to rear one's children well, as Luther put it, than to visit holy places or become a monk.

The effect of this view of life was a heightened moral earnestness. Vice and crime were gradually reduced. Idleness, begging, and poverty receded more and more as secular work was dignified. Such changes did not come about suddenly, for it took a long time to shake off the habits and beliefs of centuries. But the preaching of the Gospel did not remain without effect. And this preaching

was accompanied by careful instruction, especially of youth. It was for this purpose that Luther prepared his *Small Catechism*. It was for this purpose, too, that he encouraged the establishment of schools. The Reformation had the effect of a mighty, cleansing wind, which not only swept across Protestant lands but also had a wholesome and abiding influence in Roman Catholic countries.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

1. What was the character of the Renaissance?
2. How was the church affected by it?
3. What is meant by justification by faith?
4. Trace the spread of the Reformation movement.
5. Show how reforms in church teaching affected the (a) worship, (b) organization, and (c) life of the church.

SOMETHING TO DO

1. Trace an outline map of Europe and color those countries which were predominantly Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Roman Catholic at the close of the Reformation. Use different colors for each.

2. From a convenient book of reference secure statistics on church membership in Europe by denominations.

3. Read Part II of Luther's Catechism and collect allusions in it to justification by faith.

4. The age of the Reformation gave currency or new meaning to words which are still used today. With the help of a reference book discover the origin and meaning of these: evangelical, confessions, presbyterian, episcopal, congregational, Protestant.

5. Read one or more of the books listed at the back of the text under "Something More to Read—Chapter IV."

CHAPTER V

The Modern Church

SINCE 1600

THIS CHAPTER

AS A RESULT of the Reformation the unity which had marked the church during the Middle Ages was gone. European Christendom was divided into two great branches, Roman Catholic and Protestant, and the Protestants were subdivided into smaller groups. Differences led to bitter controversies and even contributed to bloodshed. As the new age advanced, the spirit of controversy declined, but without restoring such unity as had before existed in the church. Although religious divisions remained, men began to co-operate in their secular work and thought. Remarkable advances were made in science, industry, and commerce. Man's understanding of the universe was changed, and naturally this change affected the church. We shall now try to understand how changes in the modern world influenced the teaching, worship, organization, expansion, and life of the church.

The Growth of Religious Toleration

The Protestant Reformation had once again made religion vital in the lives of the people of Europe. Everywhere men were earnestly concerned about their relation to God. They had strong convictions and clung steadfastly to the truth as they saw it. The sharp differences which divided Protestants from Roman Catholics not only remained but deepened. Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and other smaller Protestant groups continued to disagree among themselves on some important questions of doctrine, life, worship, and organization. Each party was confident that its own interpretation of Christianity was correct. And since religious beliefs and practices meant

so much to the people, they were unwilling to give them up. On the contrary, they were ready to defend them with their lives.

The consequence was that for more than a century after the death of the Reformers Europe was torn by bitter conflicts over religion. When these controversies were accompanied by political and economic rivalries, Europe was plunged into a series of disastrous wars which threatened to destroy all that had been gained in the Reformation. Of these wars the so-called Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) was the most destructive, involving, as it did, almost all the nations of western Europe.

But before the close of the seventeenth century an exhausted and war-weary Europe turned from fields of fray to pursuits of peace. The religious and political lines which had by this time been drawn in Europe remained more or less fixed. An era of good will and toleration was ushered in. The various Protestant churches discovered that they could exist side by side with mutual respect and yet without sacrificing their own cherished beliefs and practices. Not only fellow Protestants, but also Roman Catholics, were finally given religious freedom in Protestant countries. To some extent a few Catholic countries have also tolerated Protestants.

Geographical and Industrial Expansion

While men were learning to live in peace with one another despite their differences in religion, they were becoming better acquainted with the world in which they lived. The new lands which had been discovered during the age of the Reformation were now carefully explored. Trading posts were established in North America to secure fish and valuable furs from the Indians; in Central and South America to secure gold and silver; in India to secure spices, rich fabrics, and precious stones; and in Africa to secure slaves, ivory, and other products. The amazing natural resources of these undeveloped lands attracted colonists as well as traders.

Countless ships plied the oceans as one European nation after another staked out "claims" and waged wars to hold on to them. In this way a few small countries in Europe gained control of more than half the earth's surface. As time passed it became easier to reach even the remotest parts of the world because of improved means of travel (railroads, steamships, automobiles, airplanes) and improved methods of communication (postal services, telegraph, telephone, radio).

Not only did men learn to know the whole world better than it had ever been known before, but they also learned how to provide themselves more easily with the necessities of life. Long after the Thirty Years' War men were still tilling the soil with tools as crude as those used when Jesus walked through the grain fields of Judaea. Today one man with a machine drawn by a tractor can do as much work in a day as a hundred men used to do. What is true about farming is equally true about manufacturing. Like the Roman soldiers under Pontius Pilate, the soldiers who fought in the Thirty Years' War wore clothes made of threads laboriously spun and woven by hand. Today machines are used, and one person can make as much cloth in a single day as once required a whole year. Thus the invention of machines made it possible to produce the necessities of life on a far larger scale than had ever been dreamed of before.

The Rise of New Social Problems

The geographical and industrial expansion just described gradually changed the way in which men lived. Merchants who were engaged in trade with the colonies in America, Africa, India, or China became very wealthy. They invested part of their wealth to expand their trade. They also invested money in machines to manufacture finished products from the raw materials which they imported from the colonies. Such investments of large sums by indi-

viduals and groups of individuals made possible the building of factories, the purchase of elaborate machines, and the hiring of large numbers of laborers to operate the machines. Since the sale of goods manufactured on a large scale in these factories was highly profitable, the men who invested the capital became even more wealthy than before.

The establishment of factories cut down domestic, or home, manufacture. Workers, who before had made goods in their own homes by hand or with old-fashioned tools, could not afford to buy the expensive new machines. Nor could they sell their homemade products as cheaply as those made in factories. To make a living, therefore, the laborers were forced to work in factories. More and more of them accordingly found it necessary to move from the countryside to the cities, where they lived in small houses crowded around factories. Their homes were poor, their hours of labor were long (often fourteen hours a day), and their wages were low. Whenever the factories shut down, as they often did, the laborers were faced with starvation.

Capitalists and laborers were dependent upon one another. But the conditions under which they lived were so unlike, and the share which they had in the profits of industry were so unequal, that friction developed and the two classes became hostile to each other. To protect their own interests workers organized labor unions. Gradually working conditions were improved: hours of labor were shortened, wages were increased, and pensions were provided for laborers disabled by injury or old age. Other gains were also made by the working classes in the course of years.

Two Modern Ways of Thinking

While these changes were going on opportunities to learn about life and the kind of world in which men lived increased. During the Renaissance laymen were admitted in larger number to the

schools of the church. After the Renaissance the number of schools increased, laymen gradually gained control of most of them, and children of all classes began to receive some education. For the most part teachers taught less and less about God and more and more about the world. Popular interest in things of the world and in worldly ways of thinking grew even more when men began to read newspapers (about the year 1700).

One way of looking upon life and thinking about the world grew out of the amazing development of modern science. It was about the year 1600 when the telescope was perfected. At about the same time the microscope, thermometer, barometer, and other scientific instruments were invented. With such tools as these men peered at and probed into everything under the heavens. With their telescopes they observed the movements of distant planets. With their microscopes they watched the activity of germs which caused disease, and the way in which blood courses through the human body. By means of X-rays men were enabled to see through objects, such as wood or flesh, which the unaided eye had never been able to see through before. With the help of measuring instruments the behavior of liquids, gases, and solids was carefully studied and reduced to simple laws. In this way many of the great riddles of the universe were at last satisfactorily explained. And all these miracles had been accomplished by the mind of man! Such amazing advances were made in all the sciences that many modern men have been prone to believe that *all* truth can be discovered by human reason. Those who rely on human reason alone are often called rationalists.

From time to time other men recognized that reason has limitations. It is not always through the mind, they said, that we learn to know truth. There is truth that discloses itself to the heart. Man feels as well as thinks. What we know is not limited to reason's discovery of the scientific laws of nature; it includes an appreciation of beauty and duty, of love and responsibility. So while some men

put their trust in human reason, others relied upon human experience in its broader sense. The latter have often been called romanticists.

Extreme rationalists, who pressed reason too far, were onesided and coldly severe. Extreme romanticists, who pressed feeling too far, were equally one-sided and vaguely sentimental. Both these emphases have existed side by side throughout the modern age. Sometimes one was more prominent than the other, but neither was ever entirely absent.

The Effects of <i>RATIONALISM</i> and <i>ROMANTICISM</i> on		
<i>Teaching:</i>	Stress on Knowledge	Stress on Experience
<i>Life:</i>	Reasonable Virtue	Emotional Piety
<i>Worship:</i>	Worldly Standards	Revival Methods
<i>Expansion:</i>	Tolerant Inactivity	Zealous Activity
<i>Organization:</i>	Unitarians and Others	Methodist and Others

The Teachings of the Church Under Fire

The way in which men looked upon life inevitably affected their interpretation of Christianity. Rationalists, who were accustomed to judge everything by their own reason, quite naturally judged Christianity in the same way. It seemed to them that many of the church's teachings were not in accordance with their own reason or the conclusions of science. Hence they rejected those teachings of the Bible or the church which they believed to be "unreasonable."

Romanticists, on the other hand, who were accustomed to judge everything by their own feeling or experience, quite naturally thought of Christianity in similar terms. They were less interested in the truth of Christianity than they were in its practical effects. To *be* a Christian, they said, is more important than to *know* what Christianity is. Consequently they laid great weight on "experiencing" God's love, "feeling" religion, and living their religion in a

"practical" way. They had little use for teachings which, as far as they were concerned, were not directly related to Christian experience; they ignored these because they believed them to be "impractical."

Thus the teachings of the church were under fire from two sides. Some said that they were unreasonable and others said that they were impractical. Great leaders and thinkers in all the church bodies were forced by these critics to re-examine their teachings. They searched the Scriptures anew, bringing to bear on their study all the new tools which the modern age was producing. With the help of a better knowledge of languages and history and human nature, they tried to discover more exactly what Jesus' coming meant. The conclusion they reached was that Jesus had not come to teach science or history but rather to reveal God's character and will. There should be no conflict between science and religion. For science is man's study of the visible world; the Christian religion is based on God's revelation of himself and of the invisible world which the reason of man cannot penetrate. Science and religion are on two entirely different planes. Science is concerned with man's judgments, while Christianity is concerned with God's judgments. Man cannot therefore sit in judgment upon God's Word. To be sure, man must use his head and his heart to grasp God's Word, but this message is in no way affected either by man's reason or by his experience. Somewhat after this fashion the Gospel which the apostles had proclaimed and which the Reformers had restored was preserved amid the confusing currents of modern ways of thinking.

The Effects on Church Organization

Not all men were satisfied with such a solution. It was not easy for men who saw how the magnificent powers of human reason were unraveling secrets of nature to admit that reason has limits. It was not easy for them to confess that God is above the mind of

man. Many rationalists therefore left the church altogether. There were others, however, who founded new churches with "reasonable" teachings. The most important of these new churches was the Unitarian Church which was first organized in England. Its members held that it is contrary to reason to believe that Jesus is divine. God is one, they said; the Father alone is divine. And so they called themselves Unitarians.

Other men were critical of the church because they thought that it stressed teaching at the expense of experience. They failed to see that how a man lives depends largely on what he believes. It was nevertheless true that many who called themselves Christians confused assent to doctrine with religious faith, and the faith which they professed was not reflected in their lives. To correct this condition groups of men and women gathered in homes to cultivate what they called "heart religion." In these intimate circles some were deeply moved by the appeal of the Gospel. Their emotional response, which often seemed to be sudden, was called an awakening or conversion. Those who were "awakened" usually adopted a strict mode of life which was in sharp contrast to the "worldliness" of other Christians. Sometimes, in fact, they claimed that because of their peculiar experience and conduct they alone were true Christians.

Groups like these appeared in many countries. Those in Germany and Scandinavia were called Pietists on account of their earnest search for piety and holiness. For the most part these Pietists remained in connection with the church bodies to which they had always belonged. But some of them organized a new church body, the *Moravian* Church, under the leadership of Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf. The name of this group was derived from the fact that many of the first members came from the little territory of Moravia. From Germany Pietism spread to England, where the regular and methodical habits of one group caused its members to be called *Methodists*. The leader of this group, John Wesley, organized the

Methodist Church. Other new organizations of the same type appeared from time to time, notably the many so-called *Holiness* churches of more recent times.

So many new church bodies were organized, in fact, that the multiplication of divisions became a scandal. Differences often appeared to be of little account. Attempts were therefore made to unite all the churches—at least all the Protestant churches. In recent decades differences have often been discussed (or overlooked) in a friendly spirit. Co-operation has sometimes been achieved. A World Council of Churches has been organized to provide a framework within which co-operative work and discussion of differences can be carried on. But little progress has been made in the direction of actual union.

Tendencies in Church Worship

Worship, like church organization, always reflects the teaching of the church. Where men were trying to make the teaching of the church "reasonable," they were not long in applying the same standard to forms of worship. Liturgies were often rewritten to express man's esteem for his own wisdom rather than his dependence on God's gracious will. There was a tendency to transform services into brilliant shows whose purpose was intellectual stimulation as much as worship. It was not unusual for the solemn music of the church to be replaced by selections from operas, military marches, and even waltzes. Clergymen, meanwhile, substituted secular for clerical dress.

Those, on the other hand, who stressed Christian experience and were trying to cultivate "heart religion" often abandoned liturgies altogether. The dignity of liturgies was not so well suited to stirring emotions as services in which a larger measure of freedom was allowed. Sometimes these free services were marked by people's sighs, groans, and shouts of joy; more often they were distinguished

by sentimental hymns and fervent prayers which were intended to stir the feelings of men.

Such tendencies affected different churches to different degrees. In the course of time the unnatural emphasis on either reason or feeling was abandoned in many churches. Today there is a growing desire for more dignified services and for a return to historical liturgies, vestments, and churchly music. But this desire is by no means universal.

Renewed Activity in Church Life

One of the characteristics of the church in the modern age has been a restless activity which has reached every area of life. As already suggested, the changes in industry, and the rapid growth of cities which accompanied these changes, introduced new social problems and made old ones more serious. Just as Christians in other ages had ministered to the needy and distressed, so the same "faith that worketh by love" expressed itself in the modern age. Only now the ministry of individuals was no longer adequate. Distress, need, and evil appeared on such a large scale that organized efforts of groups had to be added to individual efforts. So the chief characteristic of modern church life is that works of mercy have been carried on through a great variety of special societies and agencies. Specially trained men and women (including Protestant deaconesses and Roman Catholic nuns) have usually directed these activities. Most of the societies and agencies in which they worked have been closely connected with existing church bodies, although others (like the Salvation Army) have set up separate organizations.

By means of such organized effort the church has helped to abolish slavery and improve the wretched condition of prisoners. It has helped unemployed men to secure work by teaching them new trades. It has founded countless hospitals for the sick, hospices for young people who left the country to find work in the cities, and

homes for orphans, handicapped children, and aged people. It has established charity schools for the education of the poor in times when only wealthy parents could afford to pay for their children's formal education. And it erected publishing houses to provide people with inexpensive Bibles and other Christian literature. In addition to such large-scale activities, clergymen and individual laymen of course continued to minister to the wants of those in their own communities.

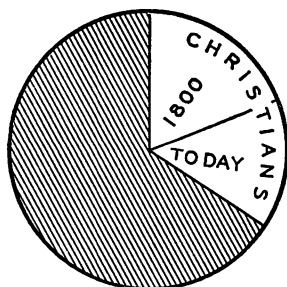
The Missionary Advance of the Church

The activity which marked the life of the modern church reached its most glorious expression in foreign missions. The discovery and exploration of new continents during the Renaissance and Reformation opened up vast new territories inhabited by non-Christians. To carry the Gospel to these people, missionaries joined the traders and colonists who sailed to distant shores. The first discoveries and settlements in the New World were made by men who sailed under Spanish, Portuguese, and French flags. The early missionaries naturally came from the same countries—Spain, Portugal, and France. And since these countries were Roman Catholic, the churches which the missionaries established in the New World were also Catholic. As a result of their work South America, Central America, and the eastern part of Canada (Quebec) remain Roman Catholic to this day. Meanwhile the traders who sailed to India, China, and Japan were also accompanied by Catholic missionaries, and so the first converts to Christianity in these lands became Roman Catholics too.

The Protestant countries of Europe were somewhat slower in developing foreign trade and colonies. But when they finally established colonies in the New World, they made it possible for the United States and Canada to become predominantly Protestant. Later on England gained control of India and Australia; a number of Protestant countries in Europe gained control of most of Africa;

and China and Japan were re-opened to trade, most of which was carried on by Protestants. In this way Protestant missionaries were enabled to enter most of the non-Christian areas of the world. The Protestants took advantage of these opportunities. Improved means of travel and communication made it easier for missionaries to reach distant lands. The languages and customs of non-Christian peoples were carefully studied, and the Bible, translated into native tongues, was printed by the new publishing houses and Bible societies for use in foreign countries. Interest in Europe was quickened by reports which missionaries sent back and which were circulated in missionary magazines. The response to this interest was the organization of numerous missionary societies and church boards of foreign missions which gathered funds, trained missionaries, and sent them to the uttermost parts of the earth to preach the Gospel.

By the year 1800 about one-fifth of the world's population had been baptized; today roughly one-third of all the people on earth are counted Christians. Such has been the remarkable advance of modern missions in the conquest of the world for Christ.



Two-thirds of the world's population still in religious darkness

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

1. Describe the geographical, industrial, and social changes which have taken place in the modern world.

2. How did these changes affect men's thinking?
3. In what ways was the teaching of the church questioned, and how did the church reply?
4. What new church bodies were organized?
5. What changes were made in public worship?
6. Describe the activities in which Christians engaged at home and abroad.

SOMETHING TO DO

1. Consult any standard geography book (in your public library or elsewhere) and see how the world has "expanded" since the Renaissance.
2. The church in which you worship was built in modern times. Make a list of materials in its structure and in the interior furnishings which would not have been found in churches during earlier ages.
3. Read about the life of one of the following in a convenient book of reference: August H. Francke, John Wesley, H. N. Hauge, Robert Raikes, Christian Schwartz, David Livingstone, John Locke.
4. Discover what you can about the beginnings of the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A.
5. Read one or more of the books listed at the back of the text under "Something More to Read—Chapter V."

CHAPTER VI

The American Church

SINCE 1600

THIS CHAPTER

DOWN THROUGH THE AGES the chief developments in the church took place in and near Europe. To understand how the church grew, taught, worshiped, organized, and lived, it was consequently necessary for us to center our attention on Europe. But since we live in America we are interested in knowing more about the church in our part of the world. Christianity was introduced into America from Europe. Hence we have inherited both weaknesses and strengths from our fellow Christians in Europe. But the church in America is different from the church in modern Europe for the simple reason that the New World is different from the Old. We shall now try to understand how the American church came into being and how it developed into what we see about us today.

The European Colonies in America

Five centuries before Columbus discovered America, Norsemen (Scandinavians) sailed westward to Iceland, Greenland, and thence to the coast of North America. But it was not until Columbus made his famous voyages that permanent relations between Europe and America were established. The Spanish traders and colonists who followed Columbus settled down not only in Central America and South America, but also in the southeastern and southwestern parts of the present United States; such names as Florida, Santo Domingo, Rio Grande, Los Angeles, and San Francisco are of Spanish origin and bear witness to the early presence of Spaniards in these regions. After the Spaniards came the French, who settled especially in the

north and middle west. Such names as Montreal, St. Louis, and New Orleans are of French origin and testify to the early presence of Frenchmen. In fact, the inhabitants of the province of Quebec, in Canada, still speak French to this day, and Mexicans on the other hand speak a Spanish tongue.

Between the French on the north and the Spaniards on the south, English colonies were soon founded. Little settlements appeared along the entire Atlantic seacoast from Georgia to Maine, and such names as Jamestown, Plymouth, and Hartford, which were given to them, show that the colonists were English. For a short time Holland had a colony on the Hudson River and Sweden had one on the Delaware River. But the stronger English colonies quickly absorbed these; their conquest by the English was marked by changing such a Dutch name as New Amsterdam to New York, or such a Swedish name as Upland to Chester. Although all these colonies along the Atlantic coast were now governed by England, non-English settlers remained. While colonists continued to come to America from England, many Germans and Scotch-Irishmen also crossed the ocean to find new homes. By 1775 there were about two million colonists—Dutchmen, Scandinavians, Finns, Germans, Scotch-Irishmen, as well as Englishmen—in the English colonies. Each of these national groups had its own set of customs, traditions, and practices, many of which were zealously introduced into the new land to which these people had come.

The Planting of the Colonial Churches

With the exception of a few Jews, the colonists who settled in America had been at least nominal Christians in Europe. Some of them, as a matter of fact, came to America because they were Christians; they wished to escape from hardships which the bitter religious controversies and wars imposed on those who took their religion seriously. So when they reached America the colonists at

once began to build churches in which they might worship according to their convictions and customs. Since the Spaniards and Frenchmen had been Roman Catholics in their homelands, they naturally built Catholic churches here in which their priests conducted services exactly as they had done in Spain and France. Since almost all the colonists who settled in the English colonies, on the other hand, had come from Protestant countries in Europe, they organized Protestant congregations here and worshiped according to their particular beliefs and practices.

As we know, there had been disagreements among the Protestants in Europe. These disagreements the colonists carried over with them when they came to America. And so, instead of establishing one church body for all Protestants, the colonists founded many different church bodies. Some of the colonists who came from England were Anglicans, others were Congregationalists, still others were Quakers or Baptists. Those who came from Scotland and northern Ireland were Presbyterians. Most of those who came from Holland were Reformed, but a few of them were Lutherans. The Swedes and Finns, and many of the Germans also, were Lutherans. But other Germans were Reformed, or Moravians, or Mennonites, or Quakers. Each of these groups organized its own church body in which the distinctive teachings, worship, and life of that group were given expression. Moreover, differences in language usually made it necessary for German Lutherans to organize congregations separate from those of Swedish, Finnish, or Dutch Lutherans, and the Dutch Reformed worshiped apart from the German Reformed for the same reason.

In this way America began to have a greater variety of Protestant church bodies than were found in any one country of Europe. But all these groups owe their origin to Europe, for they were introduced into America by the various streams of colonists who crossed the ocean to find homes in the new land of promise.



A typical early American church

The Separation of Church and State

In the Old World one church body usually enjoyed special favor in each of the Protestant countries. This was the state church which was "established" by law and officially supported. The established church in England was the Anglican Church, in Holland the Reformed, in Scotland the Presbyterian, in the Scandinavian countries the Lutheran, and in German states the Lutheran or Reformed. Other church bodies came to be tolerated in the course of time, but as a rule only the state churches received financial support from the governments.

It was only natural that the same system should be introduced in America. Where Anglicans were in a majority (in southern colonies and, to some extent, in New York), the Anglican Church was granted special privileges. Where Congregationalists far outnumbered all others (in the New England colonies) the Congrega-

tional churches were supported by public taxes. Only in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, where there were unusual varieties of Protestants, were all church bodies treated alike.

Long before the Revolution some men recognized that the system of established churches would not work in America. Each year brought new colonists from Europe who introduced confusion by settling down where colonists of another religious persuasion enjoyed special privileges. For example, so many Presbyterians and Baptists appeared in Virginia that they soon outnumbered the Anglicans; but because the Anglican Church was the established church in Virginia, Presbyterians and Baptists had to pay taxes to support Anglican clergymen in addition to supporting their own. This was obviously unfair. In 1785, after the colonies had gained their independence from England in the Revolution, the Virginia legislature passed an "Act for Establishing Religious Freedom." This act put an end to state support of any church in Virginia and made all religious groups equal before the law. Other states followed the example of Virginia until all state churches were abolished. Meanwhile the newly established government of the United States of America expressed the same principle in the first amendment to the constitution: "Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Somewhat similar changes were afterward made in the laws of Canada. Never since the days of Constantine had church and state been separated so completely as in the new lands of North America.

The Effects on Church Organization

This separation had immediate and far-reaching effects on church organization. For one thing church membership was now entirely voluntary. Everybody decided for himself whether he wished to be a church member, and everybody decided for himself with which church he wished to be connected. There was no longer

political advantage in belonging to a particular church body; loyalty to the government no longer made it a patriotic duty to be an Anglican or a Lutheran or anything else. Moreover, every man could vote and hold office, no matter what his religious beliefs and practices were. This freedom had a very wholesome effect, for it helped make church membership a matter of religious conviction rather than a matter of worldly advantage.

Another important effect of the separation of church and state was the general introduction of more democratic forms of church organization. Since no church body could any longer rely upon the government for help, each had to support itself and govern itself. Some of the churches had already been doing this for a long time, but experience quickly taught the others, too, that people were opposed to "taxation without representation" in the church as well as in the state. Thus church members gained a voice in the government of their own particular church body through representation in its general conventions or assemblies.

Closely connected with this was another effect. Laymen became more active in the affairs of the church. They took their place alongside clergymen in church conventions, assemblies, and synods. They took part in the discussion of important questions, and the more they learned about the operation of the church the more interested they became. American laymen—women as well as men—have taken a more active part in the work of the church than laymen in any other country.

Immigration and the Westward Movement

The American church was growing rapidly in the meantime. By far the most important factor in this growth was the vast flow of immigrants from Europe, which continued throughout the nineteenth century and into the present century. Living conditions in America were much better than in Europe, especially for the lower

classes, and millions came to our shores to get a new start in life. Many were also attracted by the American freedom in church and state, which compared favorably with what they were used to in the Old World. At first most immigrants came from northern Europe: about five millions from Germany, three millions from the Scandinavian countries, two millions from Ireland, and one million from England. After the Civil War, however, more and more immigrants came from southern and eastern Europe: almost two millions were Italians, and among the other millions who came were Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Bulgarians, Russians, and Jews. The population of the United States and Canada grew by leaps and bounds as a result of this tremendous flow of immigrants as well as because of a natural increase. At the time of the Revolution there were only 2,000,000 colonists; by the Civil War there were 30,000,000 people in the United States; and today the population of the United States has reached 180,000,000. During the same period Canada grew from 100,000 to more than 15,000,000.

This increase in population was accompanied by geographical expansion westward. Descendants of the old settlers pushed farther and farther west, away from the Atlantic seaboard, and many of the new immigrants joined them until the best lands of the continent were occupied. Only the Pacific Ocean stopped this westward movement.

Continued Growth in Church Membership

Thus the American church was faced with heavy responsibilities. Vast areas of the middle and far west which were teeming with new settlers needed to be provided with churches and clergymen. In the East, too, immigrants had to be gathered into new congregations. Huge sums of money were raised for these purposes and large numbers of consecrated men and women gave their lives in service to those who were without the Gospel and the sacraments. As a result

of such efforts church membership grew rapidly—grew, in fact, at a faster pace than the population.

Before the coming of Irish immigrants, about a century ago, there were no Roman Catholics in the United States to speak of; but the millions of Irishmen who came to America, and the other millions of Italians, Poles, and other east Europeans who followed them, quickly swelled the ranks of the Roman Catholics. Today, with about 30,000,000 members, the Roman Church embraces more than one-sixth of the total population of the United States.

The new immigrations also increased the number of Protestants. Before the Civil War Protestant churches had enrolled about 3,000,000 members. Now they gained many recruits among the immigrants from northern Europe. Most of these came from Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, England, Scotland, and northern Ireland. Today about 55,000,000 (roughly one-third of the total population) are on the rolls of various Protestant churches. The larger Protestant groups in the United States, together with their constituencies in round numbers, are as follows:

Baptists	18,000,000
Methodists	12,000,000
Lutherans	6,700,000
Presbyterians	3,700,000
Episcopalians (Anglicans)	2,500,000
Disciples of Christ	1,900,000
Congregational Christians	1,300,000

The task of making America Christian is far from complete, for half of the population is still without church connection.

The Stimulation of the Church's Life

The tremendous efforts which were put forth to provide the growing population with opportunities to worship God stimulated

the whole life of the church. Laymen and clergymen alike were stirred to activity. They organized societies of many kinds to raise funds for the establishment of new congregations. To train clergymen for the ministry in these congregations additional colleges were erected and special schools, called theological seminaries, were founded. Interest in the American Indians was re-awakened when settlers in the vast west came into closer contact with them. And a desire to improve the condition of Negro slaves, which led to their emancipation, stirred the hearts of Christians in every part of the land.

The church in America also learned that many of the new activities of European Christians were worth imitating. For example, Sunday schools, which first came to flower in England, were introduced into America. The impulse for foreign missions also came from Europe, and missionaries set out from America in ever increasing numbers. The European example was followed in enlisting deaconesses. The American Bible Society, and similar organizations, were patterned after European models. Even church papers, which reported what was going on in the church, came originally from the other side of the ocean.

Thus the challenge of the growing population and the example of the church in Europe combined to produce the amazing activity which marks American church life. The freedom of the church from the state and the participation of laymen in all kinds of church work also helped to stimulate this activity. European Christians who look across the ocean often comment on the fact that Christians in America never grow tired of "doing something." American Christians, they say, are "activists." The term is intended to rebuke those who believe that it is more important to "do something" than to "be something." But it is high praise indeed for those who are active because their faith keeps them from growing weary in well-doing. Being called "an activist" can be a compliment.

The Growing Desire for Church Union

In carrying on its varied activities the American church has constantly run into one great obstacle—the lack of unity in American Christianity. Although friendly rivalry has a stimulating effect, it often makes co-operation difficult. There never has been complete agreement, even among Protestants, on any plan of action. When, for example, some church bodies actively supported the Prohibition Amendment, others refused to go along; when some declared that it is unchristian to engage in war, others said that circumstances may permit a Christian to take up arms. Moreover, each church body sent out its own missionaries, maintained its own works of mercy, and kept up its own schools. To complicate matters further, new divisions had appeared in the American church since the time of the colonists.

Such circumstances as these created a growing desire for a union of all church bodies. Unquestionably the practical advantage of united effort, of “doing something” together, was the greatest single factor in the growth of this longing for church union.

Since there seemed to be no hope of including the Roman Catholics, it was proposed to effect some kind of union among Protestants alone. Two major suggestions were made. The first was that all church bodies give up their separate existence and merge into a single new body; this is called organic union. The second suggestion was that the church bodies keep their separate existence but pool their resources and work together for common goals; this is known as federal union. The first suggestion has resulted in a few mergers. The second has borne more fruit, notably in the formation of the National Council of the Churches of Christ. One might well ask why, in view of the desire for church union, a real union of all Protestant churches in America has not been achieved. Why do the various denominations continue to go their independent ways instead of uniting into a single church?

The Survival of Different Teachings

Efforts to unite churches have not had more success because there are still important differences in teachings. Churches could not act together because they did not think together. Even the search for common goals and methods often revealed deep disagreements underneath. These disagreements, even when they had different names or assumed somewhat different forms, were the old disagreements which had been present in the church for centuries. For example, the medieval notion that "good works make a good man" still survived in some circles. Some groups continued to urge laws and their enforcement as means of molding Christian life, while others reasserted the belief that "only good men can do good works" and that good men are not made by laws. There were differences, too, which grew out of a survival of the old emphases on what is "reasonable" and what is "practical."

Such differences went back to different understandings of Jesus' coming and what his coming meant. Some thought of Jesus primarily as a lawgiver who had come to reveal divine laws and secure obedience to them. Others thought of Jesus as a teacher who had come to instruct men in truths which men could learn to know in other ways, too. Still others thought of Jesus as a Saviour who had come to deliver men from their sins and thus enable them to live as God would have them live. It is true that these differences were not always so sharply defined. In fact, there has been a growing sense of agreement on many important teachings, and there is reason to hope that differences which now divide the churches may disappear more and more.

The Survival of Differences in Worship

An additional reason for the failure to achieve a union of all Protestants in America may be found in the different ways in which they worship. Each Protestant church body inherited its own par-

ticular kind of worship from Europe. Some churches used a liturgy and others did not. Some clergymen wore clerical vestments and others did not. Some churches had altars, crucifixes, and candles, while others avoided their use. Some Christians were accustomed to the majestic music and hymns and prayers which had long been used in the church, while others preferred more modern forms. Outward differences such as these reflect deeper differences in the spirit of worship which have divided Christendom since the time of the Reformation. Such differences, accompanying those in doctrine and Christian life, prevent the union of churches today.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why has the church in America been dependent on Europe?
2. Explain the separation of church and state.
3. What effect did this have on church organization?
4. Account for the rapid growth of the American church.
5. Describe the activities of American Christians.
6. Discuss the desire for church union and explain the obstacles to such union.

SOMETHING TO DO

1. Make a list of fifty cities in all parts of America and try to determine the origin of their names. Apart from Indian names, many will suggest European nationalities which contributed to the settlement of America.
2. Ask a lawyer how the state protects the church in America without interfering with its fundamental freedom.
3. Ask a member of your congregation who has attended a synod or church convention to tell you what is done at such meetings.
4. Make a complete list of the schools, hospitals, orphans' homes, homes for the aged, etc., which your church helps to support.
5. Read one or more of the books listed at the back of this text under "Something More to Read—Chapter VI."

CHAPTER VII

The Development of Church Teaching

THIS CHAPTER

THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS have been devoted to a description of the church's development in one age after another. We have followed the church in the changing world—in ancient times, in the Middle Ages, during the Reformation, and in modern times. Finally we traced the career of the church in America. It will help us to gain an even clearer picture if we now go back over these successive ages from another point of view. This chapter and the three which follow will therefore be devoted to a description of the church according to areas rather than periods of development. We shall again center our attention on the church's teaching, worship, organization, life, and expansion, but this time we shall trace each of these in turn from the beginning to the present. In the chapter before us now we shall consider only the teaching of the church.

What We Mean by Church Teaching

It is important to understand at the outset what we mean when we use the term "church teaching." Sometimes the expression "church doctrine" is used instead: the two are the same thing. These terms are used to describe the sum of what the church holds to be the truth about God and man's relation to God. Such truth is expressed in clear and carefully chosen language in order that it may be taught. To be sure, the language is sometimes technical, for it is intended to guide clergymen even more than laymen. Nevertheless it is the purpose of church doctrine to indicate what should be taught to laymen and clergymen alike. So church teaching, or doctrine, may be defined as the content of Christian truth put into systematic and teachable form.

It is important to distinguish between the content and the form. The form (for instance, the words or the nature of an argument) is of human construction; and insofar as it is human, it is liable to error. But the inner content claims to be what God has revealed to men in Jesus Christ; and insofar as men have correctly understood what God has revealed, the content is not liable to error.

Another distinction is worth remembering: doctrine is not identical with the Bible. The Bible does not give us the precise language of the schools; it gives us the language of common life. The Bible contains testimonies to the truth rather than definitions of the truth. The books of the Bible, written by different men at various times for divers purposes, are not arranged in systematic order for use in teaching. But it is the purpose of church doctrine to put the truths of the Bible into forms which can be taught.

The Way in Which Church Teaching Developed

It might seem, at first glance, that it should have been an easy thing to put the truths of the Bible into teachable forms. But this was actually a difficult process which took centuries. As a matter of fact, the process is still going on today. Why is this so?

In the first place, the teaching of the church developed in answer to questions which men asked. It is natural for man to reflect on what he observes and experiences. Reflection on Christ and the Gospel raised questions. Who is Christ? By what authority did he speak? What is the significance of his death on the cross? What must I do to be saved? Such questions as these have been raised, and when they were satisfactorily answered the church adopted the answers as its teaching. Hence we can say that church doctrine has resulted from the attempts of men to understand the Gospel and their own Christian experience.

In the second place, the answers which Christians gave to their own questions or to the questions of others were corrected or ex-

panded from time to time. Complete and satisfactory answers did not appear at once. They required long reflection. Generation after generation of men of faith and learning wrestled earnestly with all the problems involved in even a simple question. Finally, often after the passing of centuries, the fruit of long labors on the part of many Christian thinkers was set down in more or less fixed form and was received as church doctrine. But even these formulations were subject to improvement as knowledge grew and experience deepened.

In the third place, every new age had to ponder over the old questions and answers again. Old statements of doctrine were sometimes no longer teachable when men began to think in different terms. Changes in environment, changes in language, and changes in men's ways of thinking demanded fresh statements in current patterns. As a rule the inner content of doctrine was altered very little, if at all, but the outward forms were adapted to the spirit and knowledge of every new age.

Thus three factors have played a prominent part in the development of doctrine: the necessity of answering questions, of conforming the answers to growing understanding, and of adapting the answers to the thinking of new ages. In each age of the church's history, however, there was one question, or there were a few questions, around which most of the discussion and thought centered. This does not mean, of course, that Christians were interested in only one aspect of truth at a time. They were always concerned about the whole Gospel. But in each age all their knowledge and experience was brought to bear upon the solution of one or another problem which was particularly perplexing at the time. It is our purpose now to look more closely into a few of the major questions which played a part, in one age after another, in the development of the church's teaching. Within our limitations of time and space we can consider only a few of the more important questions.

How Can We Tell What True Christianity Is?

The first great question of this kind was: *How can we tell what true Christianity is?* In the second century, the century after the apostles, this question became very acute. The good news of Christ's coming and what his coming meant was spreading rapidly from city to city in the Roman Empire. Thousands and hundreds of thousands gave up their old religion to embrace the new faith. Some of the new converts were Jews; the religion which they gave up to become Christians was Judaism. Others of the converts were Gentiles; the religion which they gave up was Roman or Greek or Egyptian or Persian paganism. It was only natural that the change from Judaism or paganism to Christianity should be gradual and difficult. It was not easy for new converts to lay aside what they had believed before. Old beliefs, particularly those which have been held since childhood, cannot be discarded suddenly as we would take off an old garment in order to put on a new one. Such beliefs have a way of persisting in spite of all efforts to the contrary.

Many therefore clung to portions of their former beliefs, and they mingled these old elements of Judaism or paganism with elements of their new faith. The result was that various combinations of the old and the new appeared, and each combination was different from the other. Influential converts claimed that their particular combination of Christian and non-Christian beliefs represented true Christianity. It was such confusion which caused people to ask: "Which of these claims, if any, is correct?" "How can we tell what true Christianity is?" Gradually an answer was formulated: "We can tell from the apostles." True Christianity, in other words, is the Christianity of the apostles. And this, it was said, has been preserved in three ways.

First of all, apostolic Christianity was preserved in the writings of the apostles. These were the earliest, and therefore the purest, accounts of the coming of Jesus and what his coming meant. More-

over, the writings of the apostles could be trusted as implicitly as the apostles themselves. So these writings were gradually gathered into a collection, called the New Testament, and served as a standard by which men could tell what true Christianity is.

In the second place, it was agreed that apostolic Christianity had been preserved in the creeds which were used for the instruction of converts. It came to be believed that the apostles themselves had prepared such a creed, and in its expanded form we still call it the Apostles' Creed. A creed like this, since it was apostolic in content if not in origin, served as a second standard by which men could tell what true Christianity is.

In the third place, it was agreed that apostolic Christianity had been preserved in the church. The authority of the apostles had in a sense been handed down to the bishops, the apostles' successors, and in their decisions men therefore had a further standard by which they could tell what true Christianity is.

By these three standards—New Testament, creed, and church—all interpretations of Christianity were judged. With modifications this answer of the early church to an important question is still received today. To this day the Scriptures are acknowledged to be the supreme standard of faith, and the Apostles' Creed is accepted as a correct summary of it. The living church is also recognized—not, to be sure, in the same way by all Christians—as a witness to the same faith.

Is Christ Human or Is He Divine?

Having set up standards by which Christianity could be tested, the church was in a better position to meet a second question: *Is Christ human or divine?* This was a question which the early creeds hardly touched upon. But when men reflected more and more about Jesus and what he meant to them, they tried to solve the mystery of his person and his nature.

Some men suggested that Jesus was not a person separate from God but that he was God himself. Hence he only *seemed* to be a man and did not even have a real human body. It was objected, however, that this explanation did not fit the facts, for it was clear from the testimony of the apostles that Jesus had been a real man. Others then suggested that Jesus was only a man; he grew up to be such a good man that he became like God and could reveal God's character. But this explanation, that God had merely "adopted" Jesus as his son, was also rejected as contrary to the testimony of the apostles and the creed. Still others then offered a third answer to the question. Jesus, they suggested, was partly human and partly divine—perhaps with a human soul and a divine will. But this was rejected, too, because the Scriptures said that Jesus was **one that** "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (*Hebrews 4:15*). None of these three explanations which were given therefore proved to be acceptable.

The testimony of the apostles and the experience of later Christians led to the conclusion that Christ is truly human and yet more than human; he is at the same time truly divine. This answer was finally summed up, after centuries of discussion, in a new statement, called the Athanasian Creed: "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . is God and Man; God, of the Substance of the Father begotten before the worlds: and Man of the Substance of his mother, born in the world; perfect God, and perfect Man: . . . Who although He be God and Man: yet He is not two, but one Christ."

One may properly ask why the church insisted so strongly on the teaching that Christ is both human and divine. The church insisted on Christ's humanity to safeguard the Jesus of history. He could be a teacher and example only because he was as human as we are. On the other hand, the church insisted on Christ's divinity to safeguard the revelation of God in Christ. "God was in Christ," St. Paul had asserted, "reconciling the world to himself." Only by

thinking of Christ as at once human and divine could the Gospel be preserved.

When Are the Sacraments Valid?

Another important question grew out of the persecutions in the early church. In those days many Christians clung to their faith in spite of the dangers which they faced. Some of them, in fact, became martyrs. But there were also many others who were less heroic. In order to escape punishment they denied their faith. Whether this denial took the form of outright acts of pagan worship, or whether it took the form of evasion or flight, those who thus weakened under trial were regarded as unfaithful to Christ. When the persecutions became lighter and finally ended at the beginning of the fourth century, these weaker brethren returned to the church. They were not always treated alike. Some bishops were strict and dealt severely with the offenders before they were allowed to re-enter the church. Others were lax and treated the offenders more gently. In northern Africa some clergymen were especially strict, and they came to be called Donatists after one of their bishops named Donatus. These Donatists went so far as to claim that a man who weakened under persecution had no right to serve as a clergyman in any future time. Such a man is not holy, they said, and the acts of an unholy man are not valid. Thus a very serious question was raised: *When are the sacraments valid?* Does their validity depend upon the character of the person who administers them, or are they valid irrespective of the character of the administrant?

For more than a century this question was debated. Finally the great Bishop Augustine formulated an answer which came to be accepted by the church. The sacraments, he declared, are acts of God; they are not acts of men. When a clergyman administers the sacraments, he is God's agent. Consequently the sacraments are valid regardless of the character of the clergyman. If this were not so,

salvation would depend upon man rather than upon God. Augustine offered an extreme example when he wrote: "There is much difference between an apostle and a drunkard, but there is no difference between the baptism of Christ which an apostle bestows, and the baptism of Christ which a drunkard bestows." In other words, it is the Word of God, not the word of a man, which makes a sacrament valid. This old doctrine is still substantially the teaching of the church today.

How Does Christ's Death Save Us from Sin?

From earliest times Christians spoke of Christ as their Redeemer and Saviour. The Nicene Creed later referred to Christ as the Son of God "Who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven. . . and was crucified also for us." During the early centuries of the Christian era the church was content with such simple declarations of faith. To be sure, some individuals tried to explain how Christ's coming and death could save them from sin and its effects. It was only natural that such attempts should be made. But it was not until the Middle Ages that the most famous explanation was offered.

The man who put forward this explanation was Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, in England. He lived in the eleventh century, when knighthood was in flower. It was a time when knights placed themselves in the service of their superiors, whom they called lords. These lords they were bound to obey and honor. Failure to do so was looked upon as a personal insult to their lords. Any disloyalty of this kind was therefore a serious crime for which a knight was punished. But it was sometimes possible for an offender to clear himself by substituting for punishment something else which would "satisfy" the lord's honor. It was regarded as especially chivalrous for a knight to take upon himself the punishment for another's offense. These notions of *satisfaction* and *substitution* made particu-

larly meaningful to men in the Middle Ages the answer which Anselm gave to the question: *How does Christ's death save us from sin?*

God, said Anselm, is man's supreme lord. Hence man owes God obedience and honor. But by his sin man has offended and dishonored God. There is nothing that man can do to clear himself. What man cannot do for himself the God-man, Jesus Christ, can do. In fact, he has done it. He took man's place, and as a substitute for man he shed his innocent blood on the cross. Thus he satisfied God's honor and justice. In this way, said Anselm, Christ's death saves us from sin and its consequences. Like other attempts to explain the mystery of Christ's death, the analogies which Anselm used have shortcomings. The mystery of Christ's death is fully known only to God. But for many centuries Anselm's explanation was a part of the teaching of the church, and it is still used in some circles to this day.

What Must Man Do to Be Saved?

Anselm emphasized that Christ is the Saviour of mankind; by his coming and death he saved man from sin and its consequences. But this emphasis was obscured during the Middle Ages by the idea that man must also do something. Man must do all that is in his power, it was said, to make himself worthy of God's favor. God will then reward man according to his works. Such works, teachers of the church said, can "disarm the vengeance of God"; they can "satisfy for our sins"; they are "the redeemers, as it were, of sins." In this way man's own "satisfaction" was placed alongside Christ's "satisfaction" as a necessary condition of salvation. The deeds of man, as the "redeemers of sin," were placed alongside the deeds of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer.

When he was a student in the University of Erfurt at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Martin Luther asked himself: *What*

must I do to be saved? He believed that Christ was his Saviour and Redeemer. But he had also been taught to believe that his salvation depended on his own works as well. He decided therefore to enter a monastery so that he might "disarm the vengeance of God" by the merits of his own works. But Luther failed to gain the assurance of salvation for which he yearned. "Though as a monk I lived a blameless life," he said later, "I still felt like a sinner in the sight of God and was pursued by the pangs of conscience. I could not rely on anything I did to bring me into God's favor."

The disappointment in the effect of his own works to satisfy God drove Luther to a fresh study of the New Testament. There he found, in the testimony of the apostles, the clear promise of God's free forgiveness of sin "without the works of the law." In Jesus Christ he saw God as a forgiving Father. In him he found the answer to his need. Luther placed his full trust in what God had done for him in Christ. And he knew that there was no merit in his faith, any more than there was merit in his works; for his faith was a response to God "who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Hence Luther concluded that there was nothing that he could do to save himself. Salvation is the work of God.

Of course, Luther did not mean by this that God does not want men to do good works. On the contrary, good works flow naturally from faith. A man of faith does them, not in order to gain salvation, but because he is already saved. This understanding of man's part in salvation became the teaching of most Protestant churches, in distinction from the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

How Is God's Will Known to Man?

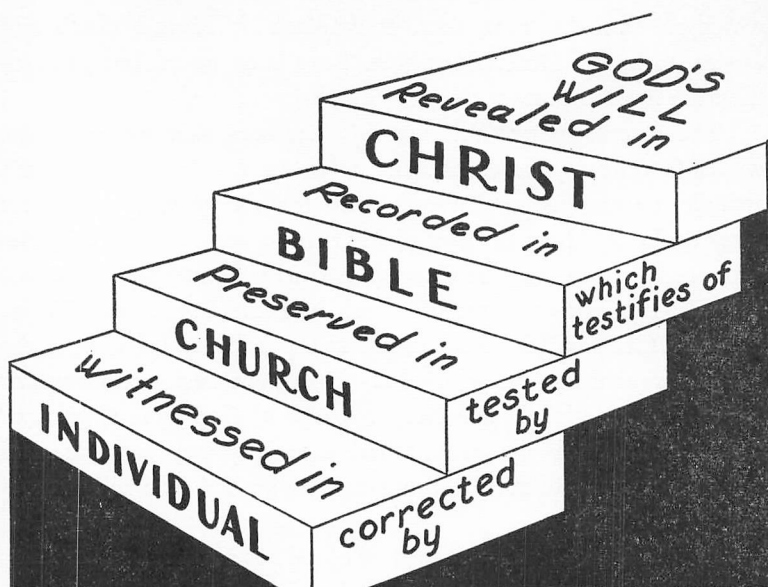
Since the Reformation many questions have been raised and have occupied the attention of thoughtful Christians. The question

which has probably been asked most often is: *How is God's will known to man?* Different answers have been given, but three of these are most important.

The first answer to this question has been that we know the will of God from Jesus Christ. In him we learn to know God, God's attitude toward us, and God's will for us. Again and again Jesus spoke of "the will of my Father in heaven," and the apostles explained that the will of God is "in Christ Jesus." Insofar as the New Testament records the life, work, and teaching of Jesus Christ, in whom God's will is revealed, it is also possible to know from the Scriptures what the will of God is. This is the basic answer which the church has given: *We know the will of God from Christ and the Scriptures.* It was emphasized especially by the Protestant Reformers who said that "nothing can be said of God's will without the Word of God."

In addition to this first answer, a second has also been given. This is that we can know the will of God from the church. Sometimes a particular organized church was meant. The extreme example of this is to be found in the Roman Catholic Church. Its Council of Trent (1545-1563) declared that God's will includes "all things which Christ has commanded or prohibited either in person or through his church," and the Roman Catholic Church is called the "fountain of truth." Moreover, as the Vatican Council (1869, 1870) later stated, the gift of truth was conferred by heaven upon Peter and his successors so that the pope, when he teaches, "is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that his church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals." Hence, according to this teaching, the will of God can be known from the church, and especially from the pope.

A third answer has also been given. This is that God reveals his will directly to each individual. This was the opinion of most mystics in every age. It was also the view of some Pietists. But it



Steps by which we learn to know God's will

has received its clearest expression at the hands of the Quakers in modern times. The founder of the Quakers, George Fox, developed what is called the doctrine of "inner light." The inner light, he said, is a gift of God which dwells in every man who will receive it. It is not reason, nor is it conscience; it is rather a mysterious, divine power which enlightens both the mind and the conscience of man. Through this inner light man can learn to know the will of God for any moment of his life. According to this view, the Scriptures and the church may be useful but are not necessary.

There is some truth in all three of these answers. We can know the will of God from Christ, the Scriptures, the church, and the witness of God's Spirit to our hearts. But this is so only if the first answer is controlling: *We know the will of God from Christ and the Scriptures which testify of him.*

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

1. What does the term doctrine mean?
2. Is doctrine necessary when we have the Bible?
3. Explain how the church's teaching developed.
4. How did Christian truth come to be tested?
5. Explain the theories about the person of Christ.
6. When is a sacrament valid?
7. Discuss Anselm's explanation of Christ's death.
8. How did Luther criticize the teaching of his time?
9. How can men know the will of God?

SOMETHING TO DO

1. Read the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. Find in them the church's teaching about Christ.
2. Read the following hymns and write down in your own words what each teaches: *A Glory Gilds the Sacred Page*; *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*; *O Perfect Life of Love*; *Not What These Hands Have Done*.
3. Read Luther's *Small Catechism* and find in it the teaching of the church about (a) the meaning of Christ's death, (b) faith and good works, (c) what God's will is.
4. Read one or more of the books listed at the back of this text under "Something More to Read—Chapter VII."

CHAPTER VIII

The Development of Church Worship

THIS CHAPTER

THE LAST CHAPTER traced the development of the church's teachings from early times to the present. The chapter which is now before us will help us to see that there was a similar development in worship. There is a very close relationship between teaching and worship. The teaching of the church deals with God and man and fellow-man. This teaching is basic not only for what we believe, but also for what we do. And one of the things we do as Christians is to worship. We worship only because we first believe in God and have some knowledge of him. Consequently the content and character of worship are determined by what a Christian believes and what a Christian knows about God. But Christians have not always worshiped in exactly the same way. It is our aim in this chapter to discover why they have worshiped the way they have.

God, Man, and Fellow-man in Worship

Worship is the most intimate expression of the relation between God and man. Both God and man always participate; worship is unthinkable if either is taken out of it. In the most simple terms, therefore, worship may be described as God's speaking to man and man's response to God. This means that there are always two directions in worship. The first proceeds from God and is directed toward man. In his Word and in his sacraments God pronounces judgment, offers forgiveness, promises comfort and help, and calls upon man to grow in goodness. This God-to-man direction in worship is often called "sacramental." The second direction is from man to God. Man praises God, prays for God's good gifts, and in return for them offers thanksgiving. This man-to-God direction in

worship is often called "sacrificial." These two elements, sacramental and sacrificial, have always been present in Christian worship throughout the ages.

But worship also has a social aspect. Even in private worship, when an individual Christian speaks with God, his fellow-men are not forgotten. God reminds the individual of his duties and responsibilities toward his neighbors, and the individual in turn remembers his neighbors in the petitions and intercessions which he offers to God. But the social character of worship appears more prominently in what we call "public" worship. From the very beginning the early Christians "continued steadfastly" in the apostles' teaching and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. They were told to "consider one another to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking our own assembling together." Ever since the days of the apostles, Christians have continued the practice of meeting at stated times because they were strengthened in their faith, hope, and love when they worshiped together.

Development in Christian Worship

Like the teaching of the church, the worship of the church has never existed in a vacuum. The basic content of worship has always been determined by the beliefs of the worshipers or the teaching of the church. But the outward forms which this worship took have always been molded to some extent by the circumstances of the people and the culture of the age in which they lived. Hence there have been changes, from age to age, in the externals of worship.

Most obvious among these changes, of course, was the adaptation of the language of worship to the languages spoken by the people. The spread of Christianity from country to country was accompanied by the use of new languages which enabled the people to hear God's Word and speak to God in their own tongue. Not only did different people speak different languages, but they often

had their own peculiar ways of thinking. Moreover, these ways of thinking changed from one age to another, and the forms of worship were sometimes altered to fit new thought patterns. The same is true of the effect which new forms of art, architecture, music, and literature have had on worship. In order that they might sing their praises and express their needs, men were constantly writing new hymns and prayers, composing new tunes, painting new pictures, erecting and furnishing new church buildings. Thus every important shift in taste and fashion also found some reflection in worship.

Amid all these changes, however, a measure of continuity has been preserved. As a rule changes were introduced gradually, over a long period of years. Every age, moreover, preserved elements from the preceding age and in turn left a permanent deposit for the age which followed. This may be seen, for example, in the general practice today of using not only hymns of modern authorship but also hymns written in every past age of the church's history. The experience of the church has proved the enduring value of many of the practices and productions of earlier ages. For this reason they still have a place in the public worship of our own day. And the continued use of some devotional treasures of the past has served to make the unity of the church through the ages more apparent to worshipers. In many places the same creed has been recited, the same prayers have been said, and the same hymns have been sung by Christians for more than a thousand years. But alongside such inherited and long-used elements in public worship, every age has made its own new contributions. As a result there has been a development in worship from the earliest times until today.

Such development has been possible because Jesus did not prescribe forms of worship. He told believers how to pray, but he did not mean that they should limit themselves to the use of the Lord's Prayer. Jesus commissioned his disciples to baptize all nations, but he did not prepare a detailed ceremony for this purpose. Jesus insti-

tuted the Lord's Supper, but he did not provide forms for the celebration. Nor did Jesus try to regulate the times or the places of worship. "True worshipers," he said, "shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to be his worshipers."

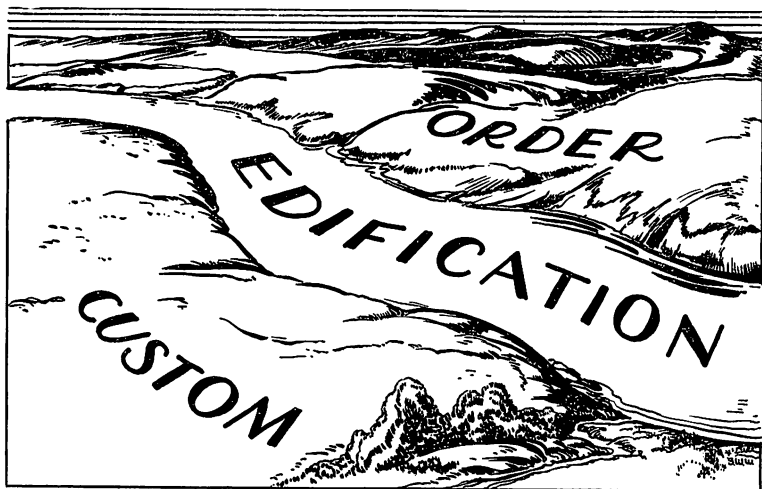
The Apostolic Principles of Worship

In the spirit of Jesus the apostles set forth certain principles of worship which were developed to meet particular needs in the earliest congregations.

In the first place, they asserted that edification of the whole congregation must be the aim of public worship. All who gather for worship must be edified by whatever is said and done. That is to say, they must be instructed in truth, strengthened in faith, and deepened in love toward the brethren. Nothing should be said or done which does not contribute to this end. So St. Paul rebuked those who spoke in tongues which others could not understand. "How," he asked, "shall he that filleth the place of the unlearned say the Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he knoweth not what thou sayest?"

In the second place, the apostles required that public worship be conducted in an orderly and proper manner. People cannot be edified if several persons speak at the same time or if some persons come to the Lord's Supper to satisfy their hunger. "God is not a God of confusion," said St. Paul. "Let all things be done decently and in order."

In the third place, the apostles urged respect for customs and traditions. Both edification and order are served by avoiding unnecessary departures from practices with which the people are accustomed. St. Paul rebuked women who removed the covering from their heads in public worship by saying, "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God." However, the apostles did not insist that practices must be the same everywhere. They per-



The stream of edification flows between the banks of order and custom

mitted differences and left room for growth and development as the church spread.

Worship in the Time of the Apostles

Two major types of congregations can be distinguished during the first century of the Christian era. On the one hand there were congregations which were made up of Jewish Christians—that is, converts to Christianity from Judaism. On the other hand there were congregations made up of Gentile Christians—that is, converts to Christianity from paganism. Because of the different backgrounds of these two groups, some differences appeared in their manner of worship. But there were also similarities.

The Jewish Christians did not at once cut themselves off from their fellow Jews. In Jerusalem they continued to visit the temple regularly. In other cities they continued to go to the synagogues.

The Jewish Christians went to these customary places of Jewish worship because they continued to think of themselves as Jews. At these services of worship they pondered over the Jewish Scriptures, the Old Testament, which told of the coming of the Messiah. The prophecies of the Old Testament, they believed, were fulfilled in Christ. They interpreted these prophecies accordingly, both to one another and to the Jews who gathered about them to listen. Thus these assemblies had a twofold character. They were at once devotional and missionary meetings; they strengthened the Jewish Christians in their own faith and they won new converts from among the Jews. The Gentile Christians, meanwhile, held similar public assemblies. Sometimes they met in synagogues, too, but more often they met in private homes or even in pagan clubhouses.

In addition to such public assemblies, both Jewish and Gentile Christians also held closed, private meetings. Non-believers were not admitted. These gatherings took place in the evening rather than during the day, and private houses served as places of meeting. The Christians met whenever they could, but Sunday quickly came into favor as the day for the chief gathering. This distinguished them from the Jews, whose chief day of worship was Saturday. Moreover, the first day of the week reminded the Christians of the resurrection; it was the day on which their Lord had returned from the dead to be with those who knew him and loved him. The practice of meeting on the Lord's Day, as they called it, became general in Jewish as well as Gentile congregations long before the end of the first century.

At these private evening assemblies on the Lord's Day portions of the Old Testament were read. Later readings were added from the writings of the apostles. Informal talks were then made by any of the men present who were moved to speak. These talks varied widely. Some of the speakers instructed calmly, others exhorted soberly, still others burst forth in passionate utterances. Similar

variety marked the prayers and songs which also formed a part of the worship. But the thing that marked these assemblies above all else was the recognition of Christ's presence. To the Christians of the first century this was more than an idea; it was a reality. In the unseen presence of their Lord they ate a supper. Thus they carried out the last will and testament of Jesus. They communed with him and rejoiced that he was present according to his promise.

Worship in the Time After the Apostles

During the period of the ancient church, following the age of the apostles, Sunday remained the chief day for worship. The Christians often continued to meet in private houses. But in cities in which Christians were more numerous or more prosperous special buildings, called "Lord's Houses" (churches), were erected as meeting places.

Meanwhile several important changes were being made in public worship. This was a time of increasing hostility toward the church which resulted in severe persecutions. Evil rumors spread as to what took place in the closed, evening assemblies of the Christians. The suspicions of non-Christian people, followed by orders from the government, forced the Christians to give up these meetings. Instead of meeting twice on Sunday, in the morning and in the evening, the two assemblies were combined into one morning service. The earlier distinction was nevertheless preserved. The first part of the service was open to everybody, but those who had not yet professed their full faith in Christ were dismissed before the second part of the service began, which centered in the Holy Communion.

Another important change resulted from conditions within the congregations. Men appeared here and there who abused the privilege of speaking in the assemblies. Some of them taught things which disagreed with the teaching handed down from the apostles.

Others tried to introduce practices which were Jewish or pagan, rather than Christian. Still others claimed to have received new and strange prophecies from the Lord which created confusion among the Christians. To guard against such abuses each congregation made one of its officers the leader of worship. He was expected to preserve the purity of the Gospel and to see to it that everything was done decently and in order. The effect of this change was that the informality of worship in the apostolic age gradually disappeared. As a rule a bishop or presbyter said the prayers, read from the Scriptures, preached and taught, and took charge of the celebration of Holy Communion. Of course, the people still took an active part in public worship, but the service became more fixed and regulated.

Worship During the Middle Ages

When the persecution of Christians ceased in the fourth century, during the reign of Emperor Constantine, the way was paved for a rapid extension of Christianity. The church enjoyed increasing favor from the government. People thronged into the existing churches and many new churches were built everywhere. In the course of the Middle Ages practically the whole population of Europe became Christian. This tremendous increase, including many persons of wealth and influence, made it possible to erect larger and more beautiful churches. All the skill of craftsmen and artists was devoted to the adornment of the places of worship. Not only the buildings themselves, but also the interior furnishings, the dress of the clergymen, and the music and poetry of worship shared in this enrichment.

Since all the people were now nominally Christian, the earlier distinction between open and closed meetings was given up. Moreover, the conduct of worship was placed in the hands of the clergymen. For their guidance forms of worship were prepared in writing.

These forms, called "liturgies," were followed very carefully in public worship. It was not long, in fact, before practically all the churches of western Europe introduced the liturgy which was used in Rome. The use of the Latin language, in spite of the fact that only the learned could understand it, limited the participation of the people in public worship. Of course this was contrary to the apostolic principle that the aim of worship should be the edification of the whole congregation. Quite as grave was the neglect of preaching which resulted in widespread ignorance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the course of the Middle Ages the whole character of worship was changed. The service was thought of as an end in itself. Attendance was regarded as a work of merit in the eyes of God. Thus the sacrificial side of worship was emphasized to the neglect of the sacramental. Not God's Word and gifts, but the words of men and what men did were stressed. This was most striking in the case of the Holy Communion. When the priest recited the proper words over the bread and wine a miracle took place, it was said, and these elements were changed into the body and blood of Christ. The priest thereupon made a sacrifice of Christ's body and blood on the altar. In this way Christ's death on the cross was said to be repeated every time the Holy Communion was celebrated. The emphasis here was shifted from what God did to what the priest did in behalf of the worshipers. Although the sacramental side of worship was never entirely forgotten in the Middle Ages, the whole trend was a distortion rather than a development of apostolic worship.

Lutheran Worship in the Reformation

When Martin Luther lifted his voice in an earnest plea for reform in the church, he was thinking of worship as well as doctrine. In 1523 he wrote: "The liturgy now in common use everywhere, like the preaching office, has a good, Christian origin. But

just as the preaching office has been spoiled by spiritual tyrants, so also has the divine service been corrupted by hypocrites. . . . Three great abuses have crept into divine worship. The first is that God's Word has been silenced and nothing remains in the churches except reading and singing; this is the worst abuse. The second is that when God's Word had been silenced, its place was taken by such a host of unchristian fables and lies, both in songs and sermons, that it is too horrible to relate. The third is that such worship as this has been performed as a work whereby God's grace and salvation might be earned. The result has been that faith has disappeared."

Luther did not object to the use of a liturgy. On the contrary, he strongly urged that such a form of worship be kept. Luther did not like to disturb customs that were already established. Moreover, he recognized that a liturgy helped to make public worship orderly and balanced. But Luther did not try to create a new liturgy. He wished simply to reform the existing liturgy, to remove from it whatever was in conflict with the Gospel. Thus he acknowledged that development in forms of worship is both permissible and good. But he insisted that there should never be a change in the original character and aim of Christian worship. True worship consists of this, said Luther, "that our dear Lord himself speaks to us through his holy Word and we respond by speaking to him in prayer and praise."

Largely under the leadership of Luther, God's Word was again exalted. Preaching was restored wherever churches were influenced by the Lutheran Reformation. Moreover, care was given to the preaching of "pure doctrine" in order that the people might hear God's Word rather than "human inventions." When worshipers received Holy Communion they were made to realize that in this sacrament, too, God spoke to them. Their Lord was present and blessed them. Here and elsewhere in public worship the Latin language was not kept. The liturgy was translated into the language

of the people so that they might be edified. The same was true of the readings from the Scriptures, of the prayers, and of the hymns which the people sang. The whole atmosphere, as well as the character of Lutheran worship, was in striking contrast to that of the Middle Ages. Everything that was in conflict with the teachings of God's Word was scrupulously removed from liturgies.

Other Worship During the Reformation

In large parts of Germany and in the Scandinavian countries the churches generally followed the leadership of Luther. In England, too, the churches (Anglican or Episcopal) made similar conservative reforms. But elsewhere in Europe other Reformers arose who did not fully agree with Luther. The result was that the uniformity in worship which had existed during the Middle Ages disappeared. Public worship became different from country to country throughout Europe.

In Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, and parts of France, Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin had great influence. Like Luther these men tried to reform abuses which had crept into the church's worship. They agreed with Luther that God's Word should be controlling, that preaching should be restored, and that the language of the people should be used instead of Latin. But these Reformers disagreed with Luther in his view of development in worship. They were often unwilling to grant that changes were allowed or could be good. Hence, unlike Luther, they abolished the liturgy, clerical vestments, altars, candles, and other externals which, in the course of the centuries, had come to enrich public worship. Such things as these were said to be wrong because they were not "biblical." This is the principle which molded public worship in the Reformed churches (Scottish Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, German Reformed, and French Huguenot) in the period of the Reformation. Still other small groups (like the Baptists and Mennonites) were

far more radical in their attempt to reproduce the simplicity of worship in the first century.

Meanwhile the worship of the Middle Ages continued in Italy, Spain, Ireland, and parts of other countries which remained in submission to the Roman pope. Even here some abuses were corrected, but Roman Catholic worship remained very much the same.

Worship in the Modern Church

The differences in worship which appeared during the age of the Reformation were carried on into the modern age. Each church body clung to its own particular type of worship. And when new church bodies were organized they usually adopted one or another of these general patterns of worship.

It is nevertheless true that in all the churches the emphasis shifted somewhat from time to time. That the aim of public worship is edification was remembered throughout the modern age. But men did not always mean the same thing by edification. Early in the modern age edification was often thought of as growth in *knowledge*. There was a tendency to turn worship into instruction. The church service became a school, as it were, and even the hymns and prayers were intended to teach the great doctrines of Christianity. This view of worship was followed by a second which was equally one-sided. Men began to think of edification as growth in *experience*. Emphasis was shifted from thought to feeling and from the congregation to the individual. The church services became revival meetings in which even the hymns and prayers were confessions of personal experiences. Then a third view of worship made its appearance. Some men began to think of edification as growth in *virtue*. The church became a lecture hall and the church service was intended to persuade people to live reasonably. Such shifting emphases as these have appeared in the worship of the modern

church, both in Europe and in America. More recently there has been a tendency to give all three emphases their proper place in public worship: growth in knowledge, growth in experience, and growth in virtue. Meanwhile church music has received more attention, more choirs have been organized, modern hymns and tunes have been written, and prayers as well as sermons have reflected the needs and hopes of people in a new age.

So Christian worship has seen many changes in the course of nineteen centuries. But the heart of worship is still the same: "Our dear Lord speaks to us through his holy Word and we respond by speaking to him in prayer and praise."

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

1. What is meant by the sacramental and sacrificial elements in worship?
2. Explain what is meant by the statement, "Worship also has a social aspect."
3. Explain how there can be development in worship.
4. What principles did the apostles set up for worship?
5. Why did the early Christians have two kinds of meetings, one open and the other closed? Under what circumstances was this distinction given up?
6. Describe the changes in worship (a) in the time after the apostles, (b) during the Middle Ages, (c) during the Reformation, and (d) during the modern age.

SOMETHING TO DO

1. Read *I Corinthians* 11 and 14 and notice what St. Paul had to say about some aspects of worship in Corinth.
2. Read *The Service* in your hymnal and pick out what you think are sacramental and sacrificial parts.
3. Examine the sections in your hymnal entitled "Lent," "The Holy Communion," and "The Church." Notice the authors and dates to see how the various ages of the church have contributed hymns which we still use today.
4. Read one or more of the books listed at the back of this text under "Something More to Read—Chapter VIII."

CHAPTER IX

The Development of Church Organization

THIS CHAPTER

FROM THE TEACHING AND WORSHIP of the church we turn now to consider its organization. When we think of the church, it is perhaps of its organization that we think first; only afterwards do we reflect on its teaching and worship. This may be because we use the term "church" most frequently when we refer to an organized body, like the Lutheran Church, or the Presbyterian Church. Or it may be because we have seen the organization at work and have been impressed by it. Of course, the church is far more than an organization. But looking at it from this point of view alone, we must often have wondered how it got to be as it is. It is our aim in this chapter to trace the history of church organization in order to see how it developed into its present forms.

The Visible and Invisible Church

In the recorded words of Jesus the term "church" occurs only twice. It appears much more often in the Epistles of St. Paul. And since the time of St. Paul, the idea of the church has been prominent in the life and thought of Christians. The term *church* (the original meaning of which is *assembly*) has been used in many different senses. But it is possible to distinguish two major meanings which have been given to it.

On the one hand, the church has been thought of from God's point of view, as God sees it. As such it includes all the men, women, and children whom God has received into his fellowship. All who have been gathered up into God's fellowship, in all times and places, are included—not only the living, but also those whose earthly lives have ended; not only those in one country, but believers

everywhere in all the world. But man's relation to God is inward and spiritual. And since only God can know what is in man's heart, God alone can distinguish the faithful from the unfaithful. So the church, in this sense, is not fully known to men. Hence it is often called the invisible church.

On the other hand the church has been thought of from man's point of view, as man sees it. Considered in this sense, the church includes all the men, women, and children who openly declare themselves to be Christians. They have been baptized. They meet with others who call themselves Christians. They receive the Holy Communion, hear God's Word, and publicly confess their faith. By such outward acts men show that they are part of a fellowship which they call the church. It is often called the visible church because, unlike the invisible church, it can be seen and its membership can be known. But since no man can ever judge the faith of his fellow-man, the membership of the visible church includes insincere as well as sincere believers.

It is clear, therefore, that the visible and invisible church are not exactly the same. The former is known to men, the latter only to God. The former includes some who have no place in the latter. Yet there is a close relationship between the two, for there is normally no way into the invisible church except through the visible. This is so because God calls us into his fellowship through his Word and his sacraments, and these are always to be found in the church which man can see.

The Church's Changing Organization

One of the ways in which the visible church can be seen is in its organization. But Jesus did not establish an organization and then call upon people to join it. What he did was to gather people about himself that they might see and know God. The faith of those who put their trust in him was the common bond which united all

the believers with one another as well as with God. But those who were thus united in the bond of faith quickly united in an outward way too. Just as naturally as the thoughts of one's heart find outward expression in the words which one speaks, so the spiritual fellowship into which Jesus called men naturally expressed itself in an outward society.

Jesus did not tell his followers what kind of organization they should form. He left this entirely to them. When the church spread from country to country, it entered new and strange environments which left their mark on its organization. The existence of the church under various forms of government—empires, kingdoms, principalities, republics—often made it necessary to make some alterations in the organization. The church also had to adapt its organization to countries which were hostile to Christianity as well as to countries which were friendly to it. Whenever conditions changed, from age to age or from place to place, the organization of the church was made to fit the new situation. In this way it could continue to help men find God through his Word and sacraments.

The Relation of Church and State

It might at first glance seem as if the church, as an organized society, could not exist peacefully alongside another organized society, the state. The church claims the loyalty of its membership, and the state demands the obedience of its citizens. But there is no necessary conflict in loyalties here. Ideally church and state occupy different spheres. The church exists for the spiritual welfare of men, and the state exists to promote the physical well-being of its citizens. Church and state also use different means to reach these ends. The church uses spiritual means (the Word and the sacraments) while the state uses material means (among others, laws and the sword). Both church and state are necessary. A man who is a Christian is at the same time a citizen. In fact, the church has quite consistently

agreed that it is his duty as a Christian to support and obey the state. Only when the state commands something that conflicts with God's will is a Christian released from his obedience to the state. Then, as the apostles declared, "we must obey God rather than men."

There have been times when the church and state came into actual conflict. Perhaps the state claimed the power to appoint and remove pastors, or tried to impose a certain form of worship, or made laws to regulate church membership. There have been times when a state prohibited preaching, made it unlawful to publish or read Bibles, forbade the assembly of Christians for worship, or punished people for professing faith in Christ. On the other hand, the church sometimes interfered with the rights and duties of the state by assuming powers that did not belong to it. Perhaps it claimed the power to set up and depose rulers, or made laws and punished those who broke them, or raised armies and engaged in wars, or tried to regulate trade and industry. Thus the church sometimes usurped the rights and duties of the state. But again and again men returned to a recognition of the different functions of church and state. They kept the two as separate as circumstances permitted. In doing so, they recalled the words of Jesus, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's."

The Beginnings of Church Organization

When we turn now to look somewhat more closely into the development of church organization in one age after another, we find that there was variety from the very beginning. This variety is a proof that Jesus did not prescribe a particular form of church organization; for certainly the apostles would not have allowed differences in organization if this was contrary to their Lord's will. This variety shows that the apostles did not insist on any one kind of organization. In fact, the changes which were made while the apostles were still living indicate that they believed in change.

There were local congregations of Christians in many cities of the Roman Empire during the apostolic age. Generally speaking, two kinds of leaders could be found in these congregations. On the one hand, there were men called elders (presbyters) or overseers (bishops). They were usually appointed by the apostles or their representatives to watch over the teaching and life of the congregation. On the other hand, there were men called deacons. Unlike the elders, the deacons appear to have been chosen by the congregation. It was their duty to take charge of the offerings of the people, especially for distribution among the poor. In such service they were sometimes assisted by deaconesses, who provided for travelers, the sick, and the poor. None of these leaders was in any sense a ruler. They were all servants or "ministers" of the local congregations.

But when the apostles spoke of the "church of God," they were not thinking of local congregations so much as they were thinking of all believers everywhere. To them the church was the whole fellowship of faith which centered in Christ. This larger fellowship of believers had its outward expression in the apostles who were personal links between the local congregations. The apostles were looked upon as elders in *all* the congregations. Moreover, their teaching was received everywhere because they had been chosen by Jesus and were witnesses of all that Jesus had said and done. During the first century, therefore, there was only one church, although there was no great organization uniting the congregations in a body. This one church was "built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone."

Organization of a Universal Church

During the three centuries (A.D. 100-400) which followed the age of the apostles, the unity of the church received more concrete expression. This resulted from circumstances more than from con-

scious planning. It was a period in which the Christians were sorely tried by persecution. It was a period, too, in which confusion was introduced in the congregations by teachers and prophets who had conflicting interpretations of the Gospel. These two circumstances—persecution from without and disorders within—created a crisis which was met by strengthening the existing church organization.

Local congregations continued to be served by elders and deacons as before. But while there had been no distinction between the elders before, except here and there at the close of the apostolic age, a sharp distinction was now generally made. Elders had been called *bishops* or *presbyters* before without apparently intending any important difference; now these names were given to two separate offices. Each congregation was in charge of one or more presbyters, and a bishop assumed oversight over a group of congregations. Thus the presbyters became assistants to the bishops. In the course of time the bishops gained more and more authority. They were often looked upon as successors of the apostles. Many of them, as a matter of fact, claimed to possess apostolic power. Thus they gradually became rulers, and not merely ministers, in the church.

The location of some of the bishops gave them even more power. Each province in the Roman Empire had its capital in which the provincial government was located. Just as citizens looked to such a capital city for political leadership, so the Christians of every province came to look to the bishop in the capital for church leadership. The bishops in these provincial capitals came to be called *metropolitans* or *archbishops*. They gained oversight over all the congregations in their province. From time to time they called meetings of all the bishops who were under their supervision, and at these meetings, called *synods*, doctrinal and practical questions of various kinds were discussed. Thus the organization of the church developed step by step, in response to conditions of the times.

When the church came into favor with the government in the time of Emperor Constantine, larger synods, called councils, were occasionally held. These were attended by bishops from every part of the empire. Constantine and the emperors who followed him saw political value in a strong church organization. To help unify the empire they did all that they could to unify the church. Decisions of the general councils were given the force of law, and opposition to bishops was punished as a civil crime. Thus the state's favor and protection easily led to control, and the church was in danger of losing its freedom. Meanwhile, however, a large measure of agreement was reached and the unity of the church was made more apparent in its outward organization.

The Medieval Papacy and Church

When the church entered the Middle Ages the Roman Empire was decaying. Barbarians from the north overran it and a number of new kingdoms took the place of the former empire in the west. But the church which the emperors had helped to strengthen survived. It became the bulwark of order and civilization. Men looked to the church for guidance, and they found it in the leadership of the bishop of Rome, whose favored position made it natural for him to assume leadership in the crisis.

The bishop of Rome had become a strong figure. He was a metropolitan bishop. But since he was in the old capital city of the whole empire, his influence was greater than that of the bishops in provincial capitals. His position was further enhanced by the fact that the congregations in Rome over which he presided were noted for their size, wealth, and good works. Moreover, he claimed to be the successor of St. Peter, who was the prince of the apostles. It was only natural that the church in the west should rally around such a man when the empire crumbled. This was especially so since the removal of the imperial capital to Constantinople left the

bishop of Rome as the towering leader in the ancient city of the Caesars.

The position in which the bishops of Rome found themselves was justified by a fanciful theory. They called themselves the successors of St. Peter. Other bishops were the successors of other apostles. Just as St. Peter had been the prince of the apostles, so his successors were superior to the successors of other apostles. The bishops of Rome claimed that this made them the chief pastors, teachers, and judges in all Christendom. In addition to such powers as these, the bishops of Rome (who soon reserved for themselves the title *pope*) claimed the power to create or depose rulers. As a matter of fact, they themselves became rulers over lands near Rome which have since come to be called the Vatican State. Many of the claims of the popes were disputed for centuries by the rulers of Europe. But before the close of the Middle Ages the popes had triumphed. Thus the church was transformed into a powerful organization with absolute authority in the hands of the pope; the functions of state and church were mixed and confused; the fellowship of faith became a society ruled by law; and the headship of the pope was in many ways substituted for the lordship of Christ.

Organization in the Lutheran Reformation

At the close of the Middle Ages a new spirit of nationalism appeared in Europe. Each nation became conscious of its own speech and right to independent existence. When the rulers of these nations grew stronger they challenged the claims of the pope to universal dominion. At the same time a few churchmen arose here and there to protest against corruptions in the teaching and practice of the church. Opposition to the papacy which came from these two directions—from rulers outside and from clergymen inside the church—combined to produce the Reformation movement of which Martin Luther was the most important leader.

Luther did not set out with the purpose of changing the organization of the church. His chief protest was that the Gospel of Jesus Christ had become obscured. But his new understanding of the Gospel opened his eyes to the proper distinction between church and state. This became a part of the teaching of the Lutheran Church: "The power of the church and the civil power must not be confused. The power of the church has its own commission: to teach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. Let it not break into the office of another; let it not transfer the kingdoms of this world; let it not nullify the laws of civil rulers; let it not abolish lawful obedience; let it not interfere with judgments concerning civil ordinances or contracts; let it not prescribe laws to civil rulers concerning the form of the commonwealth." These words were a protest against the papacy which claimed the right to control civil governments. At the same time they safeguarded the real function of the church, "to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments."

But Luther had great respect for the historical development of church organization. He saw no reason why bishops should not continue to oversee congregations and clergymen. Such oversight was useful and good as long as it helped the ministry of God's Word and sacraments. When the Lutheran movement spread to the Scandinavian countries, therefore, the episcopal (bishops') form of organization was retained. In Germany circumstances generally made this impossible. Most of the German bishops opposed reform and were removed from office by the princes. As a rule a *consistory*, a committee of clergymen and laymen, was appointed to regulate the affairs of the church in each principality. These consistories fell under the control of the princes, just as Scandinavian bishops were sometimes made to feel the pressure of their rulers. Thus there was always danger in Lutheran countries that the state might interfere with the freedom of the church. The Lutheran principle of separation of church and state has been operative on the American conti-

ment to a much fuller degree than it has been possible to carry out this principle anywhere in Europe.

Other Churches in the Reformation Age

The Reformation movement had only an indirect effect on the church in Italy, Spain, Ireland, most of France, and parts of other countries. Here the authority of the pope continued, and no important changes were made in organization. But when the Reformation spread from Germany to lands other than the Scandinavian countries, various forms of church organization appeared.

In England the episcopal system was kept. In place of the pope, the king was made "the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England." He was given "full power and authority from time to time to visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend all errors, heresies, abuses, offenses," and so on. Thus church and state were closely united.

In Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, and in parts of France and other countries, the church came under the influence of John Calvin. Unlike Luther, Calvin felt bound to restore forms of organization which had existed in apostolic times. Thus he tended to reject any idea of development. The whole episcopal system was abolished. In each congregation he set up a council of elders (presbyters), one of whom served as pastor. Representative elders of all the congregations in a territory met at regular intervals in a synod. This form of organization (called presbyterian because authority rested in the elders) was adopted by the so-called Reformed churches—Scottish Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, German Reformed, and French Huguenot. Often these churches enjoyed freedom from direct state control.

There were still other groups of Christians, chiefly in Holland and England, who held that all external authority in the church ought to be abolished and all necessary decisions made by the whole

membership of each congregation. This form of organization, called congregational, was adopted by the Baptists, Mennonites, and other small groups. Here, far more than in the case of the Reformed, church and state were kept entirely separate.

Modern Movements in Organization

The variety of church organization which emerged out of the Reformation continued into the modern period. No important new types were added. But three important tendencies affected all the churches.

The first of these was in the direction of *increased separation of church and state*. Nowhere has this separation been achieved more fully than in America; here the state assures freedom of worship to all church bodies and interferes as little as possible in their affairs. But also in Europe, in spite of glaring exceptions, the church has enjoyed increasing freedom.

The second important tendency is in the direction of *larger lay participation* in the church. Again, it is in America that the laity (men and women) is most active. Laymen serve on the boards and agencies of national church bodies as well as of local congregations. Such participation, increasingly intelligent and effective, has stimulated the whole work of the church.

The third important tendency is in the direction of *co-operation*. Outwardly at least, the church has been more divided since the Reformation than ever before. The divisions of the Reformation have been multiplied by the organization of many new church bodies—notably the Quakers, Methodists, Moravians, and Unitarians. Nevertheless, the desire to soften or erase the lines dividing the church bodies from one another has never been absent. Some of the newer bodies—like the Moravians and Disciples of Christ—were really formed with the purpose of helping to unite all denominations. Other attempts have been made—by arranging conferences

and publishing literature—to deepen the understanding of the bodies for one another. This is the purpose of the World Council of Churches. Co-operation in many fields of common interest and work has resulted. But the finest fruit of the whole tendency is that Christians everywhere realize again that there is after all only “one holy Christian church”—the fellowship of all who have come to faith through God’s Word and sacraments.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

1. Distinguish between the visible and the invisible church.
2. Explain how church organization changed from age to age.
3. What is the ideal relation of church and state? What have been the relations between the two in actuality?
4. Describe the church organization in the apostolic age.
5. What caused the changes in the age after the apostles?
6. Explain the development of the papal church.
7. Describe the various forms of organization in the Reformation age.
8. What tendencies have appeared in modern times?

SOMETHING TO DO

1. Read the *Epistle to the Ephesians* and put into your own words what it has to say about the church.
2. Secure a copy of your congregation’s constitution and study it. Be prepared to answer questions about the officers, their duties, various kinds of meetings, etc. Notice how some terms from the early church are still used. Do the same with the constitution of your synod.
3. Consult a recent encyclopedia or other work of reference to find out what the “World Conference on Faith and Order,” the “World Conference on Life and Work,” and the “World Council of Churches” are.
4. Read one or more of the books listed at the back of this text under “Something More to Read—Chapter IX.”

CHAPTER X

The Development of Church Life and Expansion

THIS CHAPTER

IN THE LAST THREE CHAPTERS we traced the development of church teaching, worship, and organization. We turn now to the two remaining forms in which Christian faith has expressed itself—the life and the expansion of the church. These two are very closely related to each other. At the same time they are intimately connected with the teaching, worship, and organization of the church, for in large measure the teaching of the church molded its life, the worship of the church vitalized its life, and the organization of the church directed its life. However, many other factors played a part in shaping Christian life and spreading the Gospel. It is our aim in this chapter to look more closely into the changes and developments of the ages in order to get a better understanding of the church's life and growth today.

Christian Love in Its Varied Expressions

Jesus did not prepare rules to regulate the conduct of his followers. What he did was to plant a new life, a new disposition in their hearts. When he drew men into fellowship with God, Jesus confronted them with God's will. They learned to know God's will and their own will was brought into harmony with it. The love which they found in God awakened in them a responsive love, and even as God loved them, so they had love one to another. Thus God's indwelling love became an inner spring out of which Christian life flowed. There was no need for compulsion to do good; at most there was need for guidance. And both the example and the teachings of Jesus provided such guidance. But here, too, the em-

phasis of Jesus was never on the quality of an outward act, but on the motive which lay behind it. To him it was not so much the deed itself, as it was the hate inspiring the deed, which made murder a sin. Murder was impossible for anyone who loved his neighbor. Hence it was enough to bring the will of men into harmony with God's good will. Every act which flowed out of such an inner disposition would necessarily be good, for "a good tree bringeth forth good fruit."

Christian love, therefore, was free to express itself in countless different ways. The daily life of every individual determined the sphere of his activities. He had obligations of love toward his family, his neighbors, his employers, employees, and toward still others in an ever-widening circle. Each Christian had his own relationships, and in these lay his own peculiar fields for doing good. Moreover, in every generation Christians formed new relationships and faced new situations. In these they were quick to discern needs, and every need which they saw was an opportunity for loving service. It was always the same love in action, but it expressed itself in a great variety of forms. For this reason we can speak of changes in Christian life from one age to another.

Christian Life in the Early Centuries

During the first four centuries of our era the life of the Christians showed very clearly what a difference the coming of Jesus had made. The selfishness and brutality which had marked much of pagan and even of Jewish life gradually gave place to brotherly love and respect. Slavery remained, but a slave was looked upon "no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved." Slaves were admitted to the Christian congregations and in some cases were entrusted with offices. The contempt for foreigners, which was common in the Roman Empire, disappeared among the Christians. They knew, as St. Paul reminded them, that before God there

can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for we are all one in Christ Jesus. Consequently women were held in greater honor, marriage was more highly esteemed, and children were treated with a loving consideration which contrasted sharply with the pagan practice of the time.

Every congregation was a center for the ministry of mercy and love. Travelers were received with hospitality and given food and shelter. The offerings of the people were distributed regularly among the poor and unemployed. Widows and orphans were provided for. Those who were in prison, either because of debt or because of the persecutions, were visited and helped in their trials. As a rule each congregation provided for the needs of those in its own community. But there were also instances in which one congregation helped another, especially in times of famine or plague. Such help, moreover, was given to non-Christians as well as to Christians. One of the leaders of the early church summed up the life of the Christians in these words: "They dwell in their own countries, but only as pilgrims. They marry, as do others, and have children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They obey the laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They are poor, yet make many rich; are evil spoken of, yet are justified; are reviled, and yet bless; are insulted, and yet pay the insult with honor."

Christian Life in the Middle Ages

Three factors played a part in changing the character of Christian life in the Middle Ages. The first of these was the rapid expansion of the church. When the persecutions came to an end in the time of Emperor Constantine, it was no longer dangerous to become a Christian. On the contrary, it was the popular thing to do and the church was thronged with new converts. Through the activity of missionaries the church was also extended to new areas until the whole population of Europe became Christian. But these conver-

sions were often conversions in name only. Pagan superstitions survived and gained a footing in the church. At the same time the level of Christian life was lowered in a marked degree. The brotherly love which characterized the smaller groups of Christians in earlier centuries was no longer so much in evidence. Vice and crime sometimes appeared even among leaders of the church. But the opportunities for service were greatly multiplied by the expansion of the church. Multitudes of the halt, the lame, and the blind, multitudes of unwanted men, women, and children; multitudes of lepers, of social misfits, and of criminals were brought under the influence of the church. Here was an unlimited field for Christian service and love.

The second factor which changed the character of Christian life was the formation of a strong, centralized church organization. Local congregations became part of a vast system. Authority centered in the pope who ruled the whole church in the west through the bishops and through numerous boards and agencies. One of the results was that charity came to be organized on a large scale. Voluntary works of love by all the members of the congregations disappeared. Their place was taken by institutions. Hospitals were erected for the sick, shelters were provided for the poor, hospices were established for travelers, and homes were built for orphaned children. Monasteries, especially, became centers for such work. All these institutions were managed by officials of the church, but the people of course contributed to their support. An untold amount of good was done to relieve the wretchedness of suffering thousands.

The third factor which altered the character of Christian life was a shift in motives. Instead of doing good out of an inner impulse men did good works for the sake of reward. They were no longer prompted by love so much as they were urged on by a desire to store up merits in heaven. The notion of earning salvation by doing certain things prescribed by the church took the place of the

apostolic teaching that saving faith produces good of its own accord. The idea of merit and reward was especially prominent among the monks and nuns who entered monasteries in the belief that they could save their own souls by a life of sacrifice apart from the world. Thus a selfish motive took the place of the motive of love.

Christian Life Since the Reformation

The Reformation was a protest against the distortion of Christian life quite as much as it was a protest against other abuses. The apostolic teaching that love accompanies faith, and that such love alone is productive of really good works, was restored. Luther made this very clear when he wrote: "Good works do not make a good man, but a good man does good works, just as the good tree alone is able to bring forth good fruit." That it is the inner disposition of the heart that counts, and not outward conformity to laws and regulations, was also made clear by Luther when he wrote: "One does not have to give an avaricious, ungodly miser rules on how best to guard his money; he learns of his own accord, from his love for money, to buy locks and bolts and to lock up his money. For his heart is in the chest where the money is. So it is also in regard to God: whoever truly loves God in his heart does everything that pleases God, and he does it eagerly and joyously without any law or compulsion."

Thus the Reformation once again freed Christians to express the impulses of their love in every relationship of life. Men learned that it was not necessary for them to become monks or nuns in order to do good. God gave each individual his place in a family, in a trade, and in society. A man could best serve his neighbor by loving his wife, rearing well his children, honoring his superiors, and working to help supply the needs of his fellow-men. This emphasis broke down the medieval distinction between the value of *religious* and *secular* work. All useful labor was considered honor-

able and was dignified. Only those who were too lazy to work were condemned. As a result of the Reformation a new moral earnestness gradually developed in Christian family life, industrial life, and social life.

Meanwhile the congregational charity of the early centuries found its way back into the church. Community chests were established in many cities to help the needy and to provide employment for those who had no work. Deacons, and later also deaconesses, took charge of such service. At the same time institutions of mercy, like those of the Middle Ages, were established in larger numbers to supplement the works of love in local congregations. Hospitals, orphans' homes, homes for the aged, nurseries, child placement bureaus, slum settlement houses, and countless other institutions of a similar character were erected and maintained. In more recent times the great variety of organized charitable work was often supervised by special church boards of social missions. Through other boards the church conducted a variety of schools and publishing houses.

Not even these activities exhausted the impulse of modern Christians to do good. They have been active as citizens in efforts to improve state and municipal governments, to reform prison conditions, to abolish slavery, to encourage temperance, to improve working conditions, and to aid victims of floods, famines, and wars. The avenues open to serving love are beyond calculation, and every generation has discovered and entered new ones.

Motives for the Spread of Christianity

Among all the forms in which church life has found expression none deserves more attention than missionary work. The extent of Christendom today is the result of nineteen centuries of missionary activity. Originally all the present Christian nations were pagan; we ourselves would not be Christians today were it not for the gradual

expansion of the church from country to country. We may well ask what caused men to spread the Gospel.

When Jesus came among men, he came with a message for the whole world. His revelation of God, his call to repentance, his word of forgiveness, and his promise of eternal fellowship with God were offered to all men without distinction of birth, race, or color. Although Jesus spent most of his time with the Jews, he found greater faith in a Roman (*Matthew 8:10*); he pointed to the Samaritans as "white already unto the harvest"; and at the close of his minisry he sent out his disciples to preach in his name unto all the nations.

But neither the command nor the example of Jesus gives us the full and final explanation for the expansion of Christianity. There was something more that caused men and women to share their knowledge and experience of Christ with others. This was an inner urgency. Bearing witness to Christ was the natural result of their own life of faith. Their hearts overflowed with his love, their lives reflected his spirit, and their lips spoke his praise. Their love of God and of their fellow-men—fruits of their faith—would have made missionaries of the Christians even without a direct command of Christ.

Other Factors in Church Expansion

This inner urgency, supported by the example and command of Jesus, has always been the great driving power of Christian missions. But there have also been other factors which have constantly played a part, either in hastening or in hindering the expansion of the church.

One of these is a personal factor. Some men and women have been more successful than others in bringing the Gospel to their fellow-men. They have been more successful because of their peculiar gifts—perhaps a larger understanding of human nature,

or a greater knowledge of the language and customs of the people among whom they moved, or a deeper devotion to their Lord.

To this personal factor a second must be added. In various ages of the church's history different methods have been employed. There have been times when force has been used to compel non-Christians to enter the church. At other times the advantages of wealth or of political and social position have been offered to converts as inducements. Sometimes arguments were used, sometimes instruction, and sometimes a ministry of love.

There is also a third factor which has had a decided influence on the spread of Christianity. Every important change in the general political and economic situation has left its mark. For instance, great wars have often cut off the contact of Christians with non-Christians; at other times wars of conquest have opened up new territories into which Christianity could spread more easily. When trade and commerce have been at a standstill the movement of Christians from country to country has often been halted too; on the other hand, when merchants traveled into distant lands they were usually preceded or followed by missionaries.

In one way or another all these factors were constantly affecting the pace of the church's growth. In some periods the character of the missionaries, the methods they used, and the general world situation made it possible for the church to expand by leaps and bounds. But in other periods the boundaries of Christendom were hardly enlarged at all, or areas won by earlier efforts were even lost. Accordingly the church has not grown at a steady pace, but rather by waves of large increase followed by periods of small growth or no growth at all.

Expansion in the Early Centuries

During the first three centuries of our era many circumstances were favorable to the spread of Christianity. There were no diffi-

cult boundaries to hurdle in the far-flung Roman Empire. The movement of missionaries was made easy by a great network of highways and seaways. The widespread use of a common language also helped to bridge the gulf which often lies between people of different racial origins. On the other hand, there were unfavorable circumstances. The small band of Christians was faced with increasing popular hostility which finally broke out in open persecution. Besides, there were few men of influence and learning who could defend the Christians and their teaching against the onslaughts of influential and learned opponents.

It is an amazing fact that, in spite of these impediments, the church grew. Among the 100,000,000 inhabitants of the empire possibly a half million counted themselves Christians by the end of the first century. By A.D. 325 there may have been as many as 10,000,000—one-tenth of the empire's population—located in all parts of the empire and even beyond its limits. If we ask how this amazing expansion took place, we can point to three contributing factors.

The first of these was the *missionary enthusiasm* of the early Christians. Every Christian was a missionary. Every congregation was a mission center. Every Christian merchant and soldier, shopkeeper and craftsman, laborer and slave, housewife and servant told others of his or her cherished faith. One of the early leaders wrote that "Christians do all in their power to spread their faith all over the world. Some of them accordingly have made it their business to wander from city to city and from village to village in order to gain fresh converts for the Lord." It was such testimony that made the rapid expansion possible.

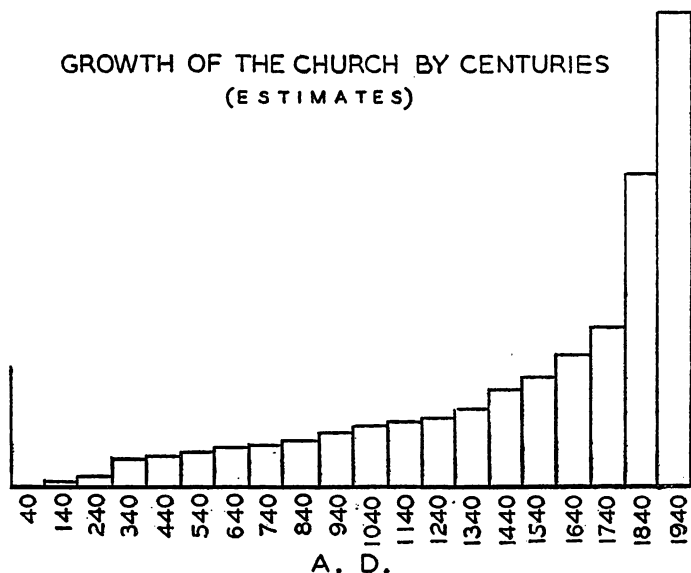
A second factor was the *kind of life the Christians lived*. They not only spoke of their faith; they also reflected it in their lives. The pagans noticed "what love works among us," as one of the early Christians wrote. "'Behold,' the pagans say, 'how they love one

another!' Yes, verily, this must strike them, for they hate each other. 'And how ready they are to die for one another!' Yea, truly, for they are rather ready to kill one another." Thus the Christians were personal as well as oral witnesses.

Then, finally, there was a third factor. This was the *inherent power of the Gospel itself*. The pagans in the empire were groping about in the dark. They had inklings about God. They hoped desperately for immortality, "stretching out their hand," as their poet Vergil put it, "longing for the farther shore." They yearned for release either from the misery or from the tedium of their lives. They were eager for certainty about this life and the life to come. And they found that certainty in Christianity. Forgiveness, peace, life, love, joy—these they found in Christ. Thus in the last analysis it was the Lord himself who added to the church day by day the thousands who were saved. These, then, were the three factors which contributed to the rapid expansion of the early church.

Expansion During the Middle Ages

In the course of the fourth century Christianity became the established religion of the Roman Empire. The people in the empire who were not already Christians lost little time in embracing the state religion. But Christianity spread beyond the limits of the old empire into the interior and far northern regions of Europe, which were inhabited by Teutonic tribes, and into eastern Europe and western Asia, where Slavic peoples lived. Missionaries also penetrated to India, China, and Japan, but few converts were made in the Far East. Despite the loss of the church of northern Africa as a result of the Mohammedan conquests, tremendous geographical and numerical gains were made. From about 10,000,000 the number of Christians grew to about 100,000,000 between A.D. 325 and 1300. This growth can be accounted for in some measure by the missionary methods that were used in that age.

GROWTH OF THE CHURCH BY CENTURIES
(ESTIMATES)

One of these was to coax pagans to enter the church by offering them material inducements. Constantine once advised the bishops to win people by supplying them with bodily needs, treating them hospitably, and bribing them with presents. Such advice was sometimes followed, not only in the time of Constantine, but throughout the Middle Ages. This method was at times also accompanied by the practice of making compromises with pagan beliefs and superstitions. So, for example, pagan temples, and meat dedicated to pagan idols, were rendered "Christian" by making the sign of the cross over them, or people were encouraged to wear amulets of Bible texts to protect them from disease and a host of other evils.

A second missionary method was to compel pagans to enter the church. The use of force was advocated in the time of Constantine when a bishop called upon the emperor to crush paganism: "The temples must be overthrown and utterly destroyed in order that

the pernicious error may no longer pollute the Roman world. God has committed the government to you that you may cure this cancer." It is curious that such a plea should have come from a bishop whose fellow-believers had just been suffering under similar persecution. But this advice was also followed in many instances. Some of the Teutons, and more of the Slavs, embraced Christianity at the point of the sword. It is needless to remark that those who were forced into the church were as insincere as those who were coaxed into it. It took generations, even centuries, before they became Christians by conviction.

Still a third missionary method was commonly used in the Middle Ages. This was the method of patient instruction. Heroic missionaries, usually monks, went to live among the pagans. With great devotion they told them of the coming of Jesus and what his coming meant. They supported this testimony by the purity of their lives. Gradually the hearts of the pagans were won to Christ and they were baptized. These names especially deserve to be remembered: St. Patrick, the missionary to the Irish; St. Boniface, the missionary to the Germans; and St. Ansgar, the missionary to the Scandinavians.

Expansion Since the Reformation

New lands were discovered during the age of the Reformation. Bold seamen left the familiar waters surrounding Europe and ventured into unknown oceans. They sailed around the coasts of Africa, crossed the Atlantic to America, and circled the entire globe. The new lands were explored and colonized, at first by Spain, Portugal, and France, and then also by England and other countries. The nations of Europe sought political advantage and economic gain by such conquests. But the explorers and settlers were accompanied and followed by men who were interested in making strange people in strange lands acquainted with the Gospel. Century after century.

with increased effort and success, converts were made—first in the outposts and then also in the interior of Africa, North America, South America, India, China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the islands of the Pacific. Geographically the church was enormously extended, and there was at the same time a very large increase in the number of Christians. The divisions which marked the church in Europe were carried into the new lands, but Christ came to be known even in the uttermost part of the earth. From 100,000,000 in the year 1300, the number of Christians has grown to almost 750,000,000 today—one-third of the whole earth's population.

There has been a gradual return, in the modern age, to the missionary enthusiasm which marked the early church. The impulse and the duty to share the riches of Christ with others who have not known him has again become an integral part of the Christian life. Christian congregations everywhere have become more and more active in reaching out to non-Christians in their communities. They have also helped in the training and support of missionaries who have been sent to foreign fields. Sometimes these missionaries have continued to use the methods of coaxing and compulsion which were employed in the Middle Ages. But they soon learned that the methods of the early church and of the greater missionaries in the Middle Ages were at once more fruitful and more in keeping with the spirit of Christ. Thus they have again become witnesses, by word and by life, to Christ and his Gospel.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

1. How can forms of Christian life change and still be Christian?
2. What was the motive of Christian life in the early centuries?
3. How was this changed in the Middle Ages? In modern times?
4. Show the connection between the motives of missions and of Christian life.
5. What factors helped the church's growth in the early centuries? In the Middle Ages? In modern times?
6. What missionary methods have been used in the past? What methods are being used today? How can I take part?

SOMETHING TO DO

1. Ask a member of your church council to explain to you how the members of your congregation take part in various works of mercy.
2. Make a large map of the world and indicate on it the expansion of the church, using a different color for each age.
3. Find out in what parts of the world your missionaries are active today.
4. To help the church expand in your neighborhood, conduct an evangelistic and/or enlistment effort in your congregation.
5. Read one or more of the books listed at the back of this text under "Something More to Read—Chapter X."

Visual Aids for the Teacher

1. *Pictures for projection on a screen.* "The Panorama of the Christian Church" is a set of 150 kodachrome slides assembled by Professor Roland H. Bainton, who has prepared a guide consisting of brief notes and comments on the various slides. The slides picture great Christian leaders, illustrate the development of worship, church architecture, the relations of state and church, etc. Cost of the set \$70.00. These slides can probably be obtained on rental from your denominational publishing house, in four parts, at \$2.50 for each part.

2. *The Living Church.* A three-part filmstrip, about thirty minutes each part, describing the church from its beginnings to the present day. Sound is available on LP records or magnetic tape. Specify type sound desired when ordering. Sale each part \$25.00; sale complete \$65.00; rental each part \$7.50.

Part I, From the Crucifixion to Missions in Northern Europe

Part II, From Pope Innocent III to the Counter-Reformation

Part III, From the 17th Century to Modern Times

3. *Books containing illustrations.* A selection of good illustrations on the whole history of the church is available in *An Outline of Christianity, Volume II: The Builders of the Church*, edited by F. J. Foakes-Jackson (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1926). This work is out of print but can be obtained in many libraries.

For American Christianity, consult the pictorial history of Luther A. Weigle, *American Idealism* (New Haven: 1928).

4. *Maps.* Any good school geography will provide the most necessary maps. The best is William R. Shepherd, *Historical Atlas* (New York: 1929), seventh edition.

5. A convenient and inexpensive collection of documents may be had in *Documents of the Christian Church*, edited by Henry Bettenson (Oxford: University Press, 1943). 456 pages, 90 cents.

Books That May Be Consulted

(The teacher may wish to consult, or refer students to books which are not available outside of public libraries, either because they are expensive or are out of print. The following is a list of such books.)

1. BIOGRAPHIES OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS
Makers of Christianity from Jesus to Charlemagne, S. J. Case.
Makers of Christianity from Alfred the Great to Schleiermacher, J. T. McNeill.
Makers of Christianity from John Cotton to Lyman Abbott, W. W. Sweet.
2. COMPARISONS OF CHURCHES AND SECTS
Churches and Sects of Christendom, J. L. Neve.
The Confusion of Tongues, C. W. Ferguson.
3. THE ANCIENT CHURCH
The Beginnings of the Church, H. Lietzmann. 2 vols.
From Christ to Constantine, J. Machinnon.
4. THE MIDDLE AGES
The Rise of the Medieval Church, A. C. Flick.
The Decline of the Medieval Church, A. C. Flick.
5. MODERN EUROPE
A History of the Modern Church from 1500, J. W. C. Wand.
A History of the Christian Church Since the Reformation, S. Cheetham.
6. NORTH AMERICA
Religion in America, W. L. Sperry.
The Story of Religions in America, W. W. Sweet.
7. LATIN AMERICA
The Church in the South American Republics, E. Ryan.
8. THE ORIENT
The Catholic Eastern Churches, D. Attwater.

Something More to Read

(Unless otherwise noted below the following books and pamphlets may be ordered from your denominational publishing house. Prices are subject to change.)

CHAPTER I

Advance Through Storm, A. D. 1914 and After (Volume VII, History of the Expansion of Christianity), K. S. Latourette. \$6.00.

Recent annual reports of your congregation, synod, or church; also recent numbers of your church paper.

CHAPTER II

The Story of the Church, C. M. Jacobs. \$3.00. Pages 9-31.

History of the Christian Church, L. P. Qualben. \$3.00. Pages 7-115.

History of the Christian Church, W. Walker. \$5.50. Pages 1-111.

CHAPTER III

The Story of the Church, C. M. Jacobs. \$3.00. Pages 32-151.

History of the Christian Church, L. P. Qualben. \$3.00. Pages 116-186.

History of the Christian Church, W. Walker. \$5.50. Pages 112-292.

CHAPTER IV

The Story of the Church, C. M. Jacobs. \$3.00. Pages 152-289.

History of the Christian Church, L. P. Qualben. \$3.00. Pages 86-346.

History of the Christian Church, W. Walker. \$5.50. Pages 292-441.

Martin Luther, the Story of His Life, E. Singmaster. \$1.50.

The Age of the Reformation, P. Smith. \$8.00.

CHAPTER V

The Story of the Church, C. M. Jacobs. \$3.00. Pages 290-390, 404-426.

History of the Christian Church, L. P. Qualben. \$3.00. Pages 347-411.

History of the Christian Church, W. Walker. \$5.50. Pages 441-564.

CHAPTER VI

The Story of the Church, C. M. Jacobs. \$3.00. Pages 391-403.

History of the Christian Church, L. P. Qualben. \$3.00. Pages 413-629.

History of the Christian Church, W. Walker. \$5.50. Pages 564-590.

The Story of Religions in America, W. W. Sweet. \$3.75.

American Idealism (a pictorial history), L. A. Weigle. To be ordered from Yale University Press, 386 Fourth Ave., N. Y.

CHAPTER VII

The History of Christian Doctrine, E. H. Klotzsche. \$4.50.

A History of Christian Thought, J. L. Neve. Two volumes, \$4.00 each.

CHAPTER VIII

Christian Worship: Its History and Meaning, Horton Davies. \$2.00.

An Outline of Christian Worship, Wm. D. Maxwell. \$2.50.

CHAPTER IX

The Church Through the Centuries, C. C. Richardson. \$3.75.

CHAPTER X

The Social Achievements of the Christian Church, E. H. Oliver. Order from The United Church of Canada, Queen and Johns Streets, Toronto, Canada. \$.75.

An Outline of Missions, John Aberly. \$3.00.

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